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MANFRED;

OR,

THE BATTLE OF BENEVENTO.

BY

F. D. GUERRAZZI,

AUTHOR OF "BEATRICE CENCI."

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

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"Isabella Orsini."*



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To His Honor,
SAMUEL C. COBB,
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BOSTON,

IN RECOGNITION OF
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF WARM AND SINCERE
FRIENDSHIP.



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PREFACE.

SEVERAL years have passed since I first presented to the American public two works of this fertile Italian author, the "Beatrice Cenci" and "Isabella Orsini."

The following historical Romance was already in course of preparation, when the sad war which broke out in the United States interrupted my labors; and since then, being appointed to a responsible office abroad, my official duties have prevented my attending to literary works. Having lately been recalled from my post, I have resumed my labors, hoping to bring to the knowledge of American readers some more of the works of the principal writers who have illustrated Italy in this century.

The work of Italian independence is accomplished. But the world that has rejoiced at the result little knows the long years of preparation and of suffering that preceded it. The men of action that have led the movement both in the field and in politics are well known; but the studious minds, the scholars and poets that prepared it, and were the first to breathe the name of Italy and Italian independence, are comparatively unknown; but their name is legion, and most of the present freedom and welfare of Italy is due to them and their teachings.

Among these, Guerrazzi was the earliest and boldest writer, whose aim was the regeneration of Italy and her redemption from both foreign and domestic oppression. "Unable to fight a battle, I have written a book," was the expression he used when he presented a copy of the "Siege of Florence," the most wonderful creation of his poetical imagination, to his friend, the great patriot

Joseph Mazzini; and indeed all the works of Guerrazzi are battles against despotism and incitements to the Italians to rise against a foreign dominion. Therefore the reader and critic should not judge the work as purely literary, but in its political and social scope as applied to the Italians in those days: which was to stir them up from their apathy; to shame them from the degradation in which they lived; to point out to them, by the histories of the past, that the causes of their present political subjection had been their internal strifes and dissensions, their civil wars, the wars between state and state, cities and cities, and very often between private citizens of the same city, the private revenges and fierce passions of Guelphs and Ghibellines, Montagus and Capulets, Whites and Blacks; in consequence of which sad condition, foreign despots, taking advantage of their internal dissensions, had crossed the Alps and held sway over them.

The above observations are necessary, because the reader will find passages unconnected with the story itself, and which at the present date are entirely out of place, for Italy is now united and independent; but at the time the book was first published by Guerrazzi, she groaned under *seven* different despotic rulers, mostly foreigners or of foreign origin, with the exception of the King of Sardinia, now King of Italy.

Hence allowance should be made for some exaggerated ideas, for some flights of fancy, for the vehemence with which he sometimes attacks his own countrymen, and the pungent sarcasms which he occasionally aims at them; the reader therefore should keep in mind that the aim of the author was to teach Italians, by the narrative of crimes committed by their fathers, that these were the causes of the conquest and degradation of Italy, and that no people can expect to be glorious and independent unless they practise virtue.

THE TRANSLATOR.

BOSTON, *March 8th*, 1875.

MANFRED;

OR,

THE BATTLE OF BENEVENTO.


CHAPTER I.

MADNESS.

Gli occhi infiammati e pregni
Di lagrimevol riso ;
Roca sonar la voce, e le parole
Con subiti sospiri ;
Stare inquieto, andare
Frettoloso, e voltarsi
Spesso, quasi altri il chiami,
Son certissimo segno
Di un antico furore.

CANACE, *Tragedia Antica.*

The eyes inflamed, and full of tearful smiles,
Hoarse-sounding voice, words mixed with sudden sighs ;
Unquiet standing and uneasy motion ;
A sudden turn as at a distant call :
These are of an old madness certain signs.*

AS ever lived a human being who, lifting his eyes to the sky of Italy, would deny it to be the most pure and serene that ever the smile of God lighted upon? Has ever lived a human being who, lifting his eyes to the sky of Italy when it is first

* This and the following metrical translations, marked M. G. M., are due to Mrs. M. G. Meatyard, of Chicago, to whom I acknowledge myself gratefully indebted.—THE TRANSLATOR.

clothed with the splendor of the rays of the first-born of nature, has not felt his mind inspired by the memory of the great men that are no more, but whose names linger on his soul like the harmonious vibration of the harp when left by the artist's touch? Whoever, watching that star of life abandoning to-night the dominion of the sky, and flashing to it its last adieus from the horizon of the ocean, has not stretched his arms toward it and implored that it might remain forever in its celestial abode? But if it set with the evening it rose again with the morning, and saw centuries pass away into eternity, generations follow generations into the grave, and the everlasting alternation of virtue and crime. Briefly did it shine on the honor of Italy, long on her grief and on her shame. Alas! I would never have believed that nations could die like individuals. What eye is not suffused when the sad light of the moon and stars shines down from heaven upon the silent fields of earth? A sound of celestial harmony issues from the motion of the stars in the firmament, a sound of eternal song; and though too far remote to strike the ear of man, still it inspires him with a secret feeling, an irrepressible emotion, which, awakening sad sweet remembrances in his mind, force him to tears.—Ah! thou art beautiful, O sky of Italy, whether night or day rejoices thee, and truly a divine creation. When Italy sat queen of the world, thou wert her meet pavilion; but now . . . the great are dead, the monuments scattered, . . . fame itself departed; . . . and why, O sky! dost thou not likewise change?—The funereal garment of the lovely departed maiden is not black; her friends choose it of a gay color, adorn it with the flower of hyemen, and thus try to deceive themselves as to the existence of her who is no more, and the sobs and sighing adieus that are uttered on her descent into the grave are not as to one dead, but as to one who is long to remain far away from them.* The eternal wisdom which governs the creation granted this beautiful sky to Italy, that it

* Alluding to the custom in Italy of burying maidens in a bridal dress.—TR.

might be a brilliant witness in her days of glory, and of comfort in her longer ones of misfortune. It alone has remained, because the anger of man has not been able to snatch it away from us. . . .

And the earth! Every sod contains the ashes of a hero's heart. We tread upon the dust of the great . . . we, who are more worthy of being buried in the dust. Only foreigners know our histories, and, full of reverence, fear at every step a voice arising from the earth exclaiming, "*Coward, why dost thou trample upon the brave?*" Go on still freely, O foreigner! for every moment of life is well spent on the threshold of death. These sunsets know no twilight, nor voice of dead ever arises from the sepulchres unless the valor or the love of the living inscribes it there. To a degraded generation the grave only represents the abode of the decaying corpse, rather than the altar of magnanimous inspirations; our mind turns to corruption rather than glory, and we have long been so cowed down that we dare not people the tomb with the sublime fancies of greatness. Wherefore should the venerated forms of our fathers arise? Perchance to see what condemnation has blasted, as with lightning, their unhappy race? Perchance to know that there does not live an Italian heart which beats for Italian glory? Spare yourselves, O fathers! this bitter grief; spare us, O fathers! the reproach of your countenances; let death be a fitting bond between us. May these ages never be remembered in history! May posterity leave us the only heritage we pant for, . . . oblivion!

I relate a story of crimes, atrocious, heinous crimes, such as only infamous men who hate both creature and Creator can commit; such crimes, that one would hardly believe there would be an ear to hear, a mind to imagine, or an arm to execute them. Nor let any one accuse me of the intention of terrorizing rather than instructing the people. Easy thing is to speak, but the words of wisdom seldom fall from the lips of man. Let him who would censure me meditate first upon the history of past ages, upon the heart of man, and he will understand that the history of great men is only fit for worthy men. The virtuous

require no recompense, their only reward is fame : the highest, indeed, and first among the consolations granted to the fallen race of Adam ! but only for the noble hearts that can love it, live for it, die for it. But to a people whose minds have been perverted, and whose souls languish in the habitual drowsiness of evil, what can be to them the visions of fame ? Words of mockery, subjects of laughter ! A stronger power than the examples of virtue is required. Only the sight of the havoc wrought by sin might, if anything could, move such spirits. The dread voice of the Archangel alone can rend the tombs, and arouse their tenants from the lethargy of death. . . .

'Tis the last moment of twilight ; a mournful tint is spread over the flowery shores of Naples. The summits of Tifata, Vesuvius and the Apennines, which bound it on one side, glow with a crimson light, which, gradually dying away among the more distant mountains, is lost in the gloom of approaching night, as time is lost in eternity. Softly sighs the evening breeze, which now lightly ripples the surface of the water, now bears away the fragrant breath of the orange, the aloe, and all the rich oriental plants which adorn the shores of Posilipo and Mergellina, and playfully surrounds the traveller with its sweetness, and bears it to heaven as a tribute offered by earth to her Creator. Sweetly sounds the evening song by which the laborer, still distant, announces his return to his family. Sweetly falls upon the ear the hymn of salutation which the fisherman offers to the moon rising from behind the opposite mountains, while with measured oar he strikes the waves of the Bay of Naples. Beautiful is thy earth, O unhappy country, beautiful as the terrestrial paradise in the earliest days of creation !

But under an arch which leads to the royal gardens of the Capuan castle, the magnificent dwelling of King Manfred, a youth, insensible to such magnificence of nature, is tracing irregular lines upon the gravel with the point of his sword. He is handsome and majestic ; his very blond hair, parted in the middle, hangs down upon his shoulders ; all his features are beautiful ; but his large blue eyes often remain fixed in intensity of thought,

as if scrutinizing something beyond this world. Upon his forehead there is a mark which is rarely seen upon the brow of youth. What could have impressed this unnatural stamp of years between the temples of him who has seen but twenty pass away? Bitterness of soul had traced that furrow of age upon the face of that unhappy youth, and that mark sat upon his head like the crown of sorrow.

Unfortunate being! Never has maternal caress stilled his childish tears; a father's kiss has never gladdened the days of his infancy; he has known neither father nor mother. He stands in life like a plant in the desert.—He questions memory, and finds it a blank: only far, very far back, some remembrances of blood, . . . but confused, obscure, as it were, and which in vain he tries to bring more distinctly before his mind. His soul burns as fiercely as the sun under which he was born; his birth troubles him; an intuitive feeling of greatness weighs upon him; he craves eagerly for something he knows not; he would, with a glance, penetrate the mysteries of creation; he would, with a word, subdue the nations of the earth; would be a God with the attributes of man, or a man with the omniscience and the thunders of God. But his lofty fancy falls dejected and overwhelmed at its own daring, when he considers his unknown birth; his heart groans with anguish tortured by all the torments of the fire of ambition. Perhaps this fire would long since have consumed him, had not a form of heavenly beauty arisen in his mind, and quenched at times its violence. Certainly his was a desperate love, and one well worthy of him. The mere thought of it, could men know his thought, would have been punished with death. What! a squire dares to raise his looks to the daughter of his king? What are his hopes? Dares he to think that the maiden of the blood of Swabia will yield her heart to one so humble? Does he know the dangers, does he think of the sufferings that beset his path? He loves, and loves desperately.

But his gaze, long insensible to all the beauties that nature spread around him, fixed itself of a sudden upon the dwelling of the son of Frederick. The castle of

Capua seemed truly the dwelling of a king ; but though by its size it appeared such as only an architect of genius might imagine, by its strength it was such as a tyrant in the agony of fear would choose. William the Bad, of Norman race, built it for his own personal protection. Walls of enormous thickness, numerous great towers, platforms, bulwarks, and all the precautions that art in the twelfth century could suggest, had been put into use for insuring the safety of the trembling tyrant ; but in vain ! Where the punishment of man fails, there arises the judgment of God : he died, and not by the sword ; but his race was extinguished ; the throne, founded by the valor of Robert Guiscard, and by Count Roger, fell under the eternal justice which visited the crimes of William I. upon the unfortunate William, son of Tancred, Count of Lecce.

Frederick II. wished to make the castle look more cheerful, and invited for that purpose to Naples Nicholas Pisano, the greatest architect of his time, giving him the charge of adorning it. But the genius of the artist was subdued, in spite of himself, at the sight of the edifice which he was to improve, and his additions only increased its gloom. Like unto the melodious troubadour, who in the silence of the night attempts to sing a merry roundelay, by degrees almost involuntarily the saddest notes escape from his lute, and his merry song ends in a mournful lay.

The moon, joyfully traversing the heavens, indifferent whether her rays are blessed or cursed in the earth, shedding them alike upon the lovers who ardently long for the hour of tender meeting, and upon the assassin who rushes from the shade, strikes the blow, and shrouds himself again in darkness, pours her light upon the Capuan castle. The illuminated parts of the building appear even larger, from the contrast with the shadows in which the other portions are buried. Some of the towers seem to have no foundation in the earth, but to stand as if suspended in the air ; others appear half ruined ; they strike the fancy as one of those castles which writers of fiction describe in their legends, where evil spirits assemble to

celebrate their unholy orgies, and to intoxicate their souls with blood. The excited imagination of the observer might fancy to see the spectre of William the Bad wandering through those ruins, condemned to visit the mansion erected by him, but inhabited by a race not his own; and would hear the groan of anger, or of conscience, which he utters in the desperation of his soul.

Such was the edifice upon which the youth was gazing. After he had regarded it long and earnestly, he shook his head, saying, "The works of tyranny are as great as the works of liberty. . . . Fear as well as pride have given to the world sublime things; . . . good as well as bad have produced works which are marvels for the crowd, but which, for those who have hearts, excite only compassion for human weakness.—Blessed Mary! What is indeed this castle? What are the treasures that Manfred found in Luceria? What is the power of Frederick Barbarossa, or of Frederick II.? These could not conquer Italy; the first was stopped by walls of clay and straw; the second defeated by people from whom he had withdrawn, that he might not be a witness of their destruction.* And then, what would be the empire of Italy, what that of the world? I might be the greatest of mortals, but still only a mortal;—the strongest of men:—but who can boast in his arm the strength of the whirlwind? The wisest of the sons of earth:—but who has the intellect of the sons of heaven? Nevertheless my soul would forget, or at least soothe this feeling which embitters my life, if I would rest my head on the breast of . . . whom? Did I name her? Are these not retreating footsteps which I hear? No; . . . all is silent. I must dread even to name her! . . . O Capuan castle, I would be content with thy walls! O throne of my king, however small, thou wouldst be very acceptable to me if I could seat

* The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, in 1175, was forced to raise the siege of Alexandria, called afterward "*Della Paglia*" (of straw), for the reason given. The army of Frederick II. was routed in 1248 by the inhabitants of Parma while he, sure of the conquest of the city, was away from the camp, amusing himself in hawking.

myself there with her whom I have made the idol of my thoughts!—I have always loved the throne, because I feel myself born for it; but now this desire has become madness, for nowhere else but upon a throne could I live with her, . . . or would, if I could. . . But I am an unknown, . . . nurtured by charity in the house of a stranger, compelled to serve, having a soul fit to command. . . . I know neither father nor mother; . . . and I must even fear to know them; for perhaps my birth is stained with the blot of shame."

Here he was silent: a mortal pallor overspread his face; he stood motionless, with looks intent, his lips parted like one tormented by thirst; drops of perspiration fell thick from his brow down over his cheeks, as if pressed out from a brain overcharged with anguish. After a time, the blood returned so impetuously as to crimson his face, while the throbbing veins and swollen muscles seemed ready to burst from the violence of his emotion; his whole frame was convulsed, and he held his head with both hands, as if to keep it from bursting. A state so miserable could not continue, and he sank groaning upon a stone seat.

"Oh! this cannot last," he resumed after a long pause, in a faint voice; "it cannot, will not last. Since death is certain, let me declare myself, and die nobly, . . . nobly! . . . But I might be contemptuously repulsed, and, while I hoped to die nobly, I should be scorned for my presumption, and perhaps despised as a fool? Blessed Mary! what a life is this, where virtue is held a crime, and crime receives the reward of virtue! Who is the wise man that can teach us to distinguish the one from the other, or tell us in what they consist? Will that which we esteem crime be so regarded by future ages? Is virtue which injures us still virtue? Must we practise it to our own loss? Where has nature written her laws? In the heart? I place my hand upon mine, but it only throbs with the tumult of passions.—What avails it to meditate upon the reasons of my destiny? It is far better to endure it with hands crossed upon the breast, and calmly await the event. Thus will I do."

“Am I though really so unfortunate? Can my memory recall aught that might soften with its illusions a soul torn by so many real agonies? Oh! the realms of fancy delightfully enchant our imagination, but their fascination is like that of the serpent in Eden; his ended in sin, theirs in withering the mind which abandons itself to them.—Let me think. . . . The day in which her father assumed the royal crown, she dropped at my feet the scarf which she wore: I picked it up. . . . It has triumphed with me in the tournament; . . . it now rests upon my heart: . . . it shall remain there through life; . . . it shall cover my face in the grave.—And the day of the tournament! Oh! only bright day of my past years! I, an obscure esquire, covered with mail and bearing the colors of Manfred’s daughter, entered the lists with proud barons and famous captains, and, a mere youth, dared to couch a lance with the masters of the art, with knights renowned for a thousand exploits, and I conquered. There only remained the valiant Count Giordano d’Angalone. We met; he fell rolling in the dust. He laid the blame upon his saddle-girth; it may be so, but he fell. I concealed myself, and he received the prize of the tournament, since the true victor did not present himself; nor did I envy him, for I felt I had obtained a far higher prize than his—the love of Manfred’s daughter.—And the next day! Oh! never shall I forget the twelfth of August! I led her white palfrey:—in mounting she placed her hand in mine, . . . and trembled; . . . I likewise trembled and blushed. But did she blush? I dared not raise my eyes to her face. Oh! that was joy, . . . and perhaps false. Who knows but her scarf fell by accident? Who knows but she trembled only for fear of falling; or, may be, from scorn at my boldness? . . . The Swabian blood is very proud; . . . but if pride were a test of lineage, I also could feel myself of the blood of Frederick. But if she, bending from her height, should ask me, ‘Who art thou?’—Who am I? . . . One unknown to himself and to others; one banished, by his mother’s fault, from his father’s breast; a living monument of sin, a shame to himself, a disgrace to his kindred. . . . Oh! whoever thou art

that gave me a life which I would never have accepted, had it been possible to refuse, heavy must have been thy sins, for fearful is the punishment which I endure ! ”

Thus spoke the unhappy youth, alternating between grief and joy, when natural weariness overcame him and forced him to a seat. He began to murmur the notes of a mournful ballad, and his music-loving soul was soothed by the divine melodies born and preserved under the sky of Italy. Then thoughts of warlike exploits came to his spirit refreshed by music ; he began first very softly ; little by little his voice grew louder ; at last it arose to the pitch of the warlike song. Then he looked forward to more future glory, to military prowess, to fame ; he arose, took his sword, and, gracefully wrapped in his mantle, walked to and fro, in the pride of a mind elevated to the contemplation of the Infinite.

CHAPTER II.

LOVE.

Pargoletta ella era
Tutta sorriso, tutta gioia ; ai fiori
Parea in mezzo volar nel più felice
Sentiero della vita. Ecco ad un tratto,
Di tanta gioia estinto il raggio, estinto
Al primo assalto del dolor.

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI, *Tragedia*.

She was a child, all smiles, all joy ;
And seemed along life's flowery way
Fluttering in bliss without alloy.
But in one moment, joy's bright ray
The touch of sorrow can destroy.

M. G. M.



WHY should a tomb, a miracle of rare marbles and art, cover the ashes of one whose life would have been unknown except from the monument of his death ? Why do heavenly forms, delicate contours, sprightliness of external grace, clothe the soul

of woman? Why are we endowed with hearts which throb in her presence, nerves which thrill at this most beautiful spectacle of creation? No animal has contributed any of its charms to the female form. The hues of the bird of paradise, of the butterfly of Cashmere, cannot compare with the divine tints that glow on the cheek of beauty. The gazelle has not the eyes of woman; precious stones do not shine with such a lustre; and poets, to find a worthy similitude, are obliged to have recourse to the skies. But no reptile, however hateful, was exempted from furnishing its contribution to form the soul which regulates her movements; none but the scorpion, which, surrounded by the fire, turns upon itself its envenomed sting, and nobly dies. Beautiful art thou, O creature! but thy beauty bears a dark impress: thou wert daughter of a sublime thought, but, like Lucifer, thou art fallen; thy rays are like those of the setting sun: they dazzle, but comfort not the sight; thy beauty is our torment. Grieving we go in search of that innocence which Eve left in Eden, and this is the bitterest trial of our hearts. But thy heart, in its turn, is condemned to break for our inconstancy. Perchance thou oughtest to be cursed, for thou wert the first to sin; the serpent dwells in thy graceful form. Curiosity is the mother of wisdom;—in thee it became the mother of sin. Thou hast opened the way to crime, but we have surpassed thee in it.—Oh! children of dust, do not curse, but pity one another.

In the halls of the Capuan castle lives a maiden divine in form, divine in soul. Her head was resting upon a pillow, her looks cast down: a majestic beauty was visible in her whole aspect. Many maidens were standing around her, silently wishing that she would raise her eyes, which, when raised, they could not meet, for they flashed forth such light as revealed a soul that one would never have believed could dwell in her delicate frame. She was as beautiful as the mother of men, whom the divine Ghiberti painted rising from Adam's body, and led by angels to place, in token of love, her hand in the hand of God. Truly, she appeared no child of mortal wedlock; perchance the union of the sons of God, when they

loved the beautiful daughters of Cain, might have produced her ; but the spirit of the Eternal did not bless those marriages, for they originated in sin, whence came the race of giants, and "Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord."

Vainly should we seek, from all the languages of the earth, words which could give the faintest idea of that image of beauty ; it would be easier to bring light out of darkness, or to stir the soul of the sons of Italy.

After a long time, she rose from her seat and went towards the balcony ; her step was as light as the zephyr that rustles among the roses, or as the incense that rises to the Deity ; the folds of her dress, fanned by the breeze, diffused around a rich fragrance ; she was neither sad nor gay, but calm with the solemnity of contemplation when the lightning of thought flashes over the events of centuries, when the ear of the divine intellect hears the mysterious music of the spheres, and its eye paints in the heavens the creations of sublime imaginations.

Having reached the balcony, she stopped to look at the sky, and sighed ; then, turning to the maiden at her side, she spoke with a voice as melodious as that of Eloah, the angel who sings the hymn of the skies before the throne of Jehovah.*

"See, Gismonda, how the sky rejoices. Even if our religion had not taught us so, our minds would think it the dwelling of God.—Oh ! may it please Him to call me quickly to its peace !"

"Noble Yole, the Lord is wise in all His works ; He alone knows good and evil. We, adoring, ought to await the decrees of His justice."

"Heaven preserve me from murmuring against my Creator, but the prayers of the afflicted cannot be unwelcome before His throne."

"My sweet lady, is it for you to offer mournful prayers to God ? For you, daughter of King Manfred, sister of the Queen of Arragon, grandchild of the Fredericks ? For you, of the blood of the House of Swabia, placed by

* *The Messiah.* Klopstock.

fortune in the highest position that mortal mind could wish? Your life lies stretched out before you like a path of flowers; pleasure marks your days; you, desired by every brave knight, you, sighed for by every troubadour, you, beloved by all, have not to fear the misfortunes that afflict most of the race of Adam."

"Nevertheless I am such that nothing remains for me to fear save the anger of God."

"And His anger will not come; for 'He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' and sheds balm upon the wounded spirit."

"Gismonda, our House has been excluded from the communion of the faithful since the Council of Lyons, when, in spite of the defence of Taddeo da Suessa, Innocent excommunicated Frederick. Truly, we may not have suffered for want of the offices of the Church, but Pope Clement has taken occasion, from that very thing, to confirm the anathema against us. He has freed our vassals from their oath of fealty when, even without that, we were surrounded by only too many traitors; he seeks through the world for an enemy to our family, and we already had enough who panted for a throne. Fortune did not allow Richard of Cornwall to accept our crown, offered to him by one who, unable to take it for himself, gives it to others, nor did she enable Edward of England to raise arms against us; but to a watchful enemy, it seldom happens that time does not bring opportunity, and Clement is not the man to let it escape."

"Daughter of Manfred, the enemy has never seen your father retreat; if we do not have peace, we shall have victory."

"Amen, Gismonda, amen. But do you see that comet down near the horizon, which, rising in the east, goes through the sky toward the west, and stops above us? * Hast thou heard what astrologers say of it? It is a cer-

* This comet appeared in August, 1264, and was seen till November. At the time in which we place this scene, it had sunk below the horizon, for it disappeared the very night in which Urban IV. died; but to make it remain a few months longer on the horizon is hardly worth noticing.

tain sign of the death of a king, and of a change of empires. I think there is no one living who can bear misfortune without complaint better than the daughter of Manfred : but misfortune, however borne, is still misfortune."

"I would not call in question the influences of the stars ; but, to judge by the effects hitherto produced upon the earth, it appears to me that you might rather rejoice than mourn. The comet appeared in August, and in November Urban IV. died."

"But the comet has not yet disappeared. Believe me, Gismonda, a great king must die, and Charles d'Anjou is only Count of Provence."

"And he will be king before entering his kingdom. Must not his way lead through Rome ? There he will certainly receive the crown and the benediction ; may the latter rejoice his soul, for the former will never rest upon his brow !"

"Oh ! if the barons of the kingdom were as faithful as they are powerful, the crown of Manfred would never bind the temples of Charles :—but here live traitors innumerable, and here more than anywhere else do they seem a growth natural to the soil and sky. Many are the enemies of my father, whom, on his way to the throne, he has conquered and pardoned : but pardon does not heal the smart of wounded pride, nor soften hatred ; for there is nothing in the world that humiliates like pardon of an enemy ; and at the first cry of revolt, you will see them hasten to fight under the standard of the lilies with that fury that the sting of treachery alone can give. Nor will these be the only ones to show their enmity : there are men to whom the happiness of others is a thorn ; always gloomy through the envy which torments them ; woe to thee, if thou darest to show thy happiness in their presence ! They mark thee, follow thee, nor ever leave thee, till, by many years of anguish, thou hast compensated for the joy of a moment. The sound of weeping is music in their ears, the cry of despair their delight ; their hearts exult only at the sight of ruins. As to friends, they are numerous in prosperity : nor do I blame them for that ; no ! Nature has implanted in our hearts a voice which

cries, 'Be happy alone.' Neither do I reproach them with cruelty, since it may be delightful to save a friend; but when fate does not grant it, one should not love the friend more than one's self. And you, my beloved Gismonda, who have grown up with me from childhood, and whom a bond of mutual love unites with me in sisterly sympathy, to whom now want, disgrace, and death would seem as nothing compared to being obliged to leave me forever, you likewise may one day forget me."

Gismonda, overcome by grief, did not reply; she bent her head, and great tears rose to her eyes: the affectionate girl attempted to conceal them from Yole, but her emotion did not suffer it. She turned to look at her mistress, and, seeing her unmoved, the bursting, slighted heart broke through all restraint. A frequent sob showed how deeply the noble girl was wounded.

Yole looked at her, and added, "Thus it is: we are hurt at hearing in words what will be proved in deeds. A secret and generous feeling, coming to us we know not whence, teaches us that it is right to share the misfortunes of a friend; but Nature does not consent, for she has formed us such that grief is our bitterest enemy, and the torments of anguish can influence us more than the delights of love. Thus it is. I would not blame you, my sweet Gismonda; the fault comes from something far beyond your power. Who can dare to oppose the voice of Nature? We cannot; nor do I wish from you more than you can give. Gismonda, dear Gismonda! if I have ever shown you any kindness, if there is any remembrance of me upon which your mind can rest with pleasure, I pray you, that when, in this same castle, the voice of the new lord shall summon you to attend his wife or daughter (for you are of the noblest blood in the kingdom), if it should ever happen that, blinded by prosperity, they should reject the prayers of the unfortunate, and from the height where fortune has placed them they should refuse to listen to the groan which rises from the dust, remind them that they are but dust,—that fortune is changeable,—and then add, 'The blood of Swabia was as illustrious as any in France; the daughter of Manfred

was also illustrious, but the troubadour and the minstrel had no songs which could delight her so much as the broken words and the tears of the unfortunate whom she had comforted.' And if my name will avail to conquer arrogance of heart, and to turn the prosperous from the ways of pride into the path that leads to paradise, it will be the deepest joy that can touch my soul, wherever it may please my Creator to place it. But if the noble consort and daughter of the count should have hearts that beat for the miseries of humanity, and should smile with my smile, then love them, Gismonda; love them as you have loved me; do not sadden them by narrating my mournful fate, nor by the mention of my name diminish a joy that the Lord has not granted me, and which He has bestowed upon them as more worthy. But when, far from every one, safe in the seclusion of your own chamber, you can freely indulge in the memory of the past, oh! then, dear Gismonda, then give me a sigh, a thought, a tear;—I will surely know that tear, and with a tear I will reply."

The beautiful mourner ceased, and, sadly looking around, she saw all her maidens overwhelmed with grief, and the gentle Gismonda in such a state that she could no longer hear such despairing words. She was silent; a deep stillness pervaded the room; the tapers shed a pallid light upon those young girls in all the various attitudes of grief. They appeared like statues by some illustrious sculptor, destined to adorn the tombs of the powerful.

Yole stood for a long time buried in thought; then, starting suddenly, she ran and threw herself in Gismonda's arms, and with tenderest love comforted her, and with her own handkerchief wiped away her tears; then with a gentle voice she resumed:

"Oh! do not weep, Gismonda, do not weep. Ill-starred is she who forces tears to the eyes of beauty.—Holy Virgin! my misery overflows my own soul, and a portion of it must flow out upon the souls of others. Mother of the afflicted! too many pains already pierce me. Let it suffice. I am innocent; but if it is destined

that I should drink the cup of sorrow, let not this dear maiden consume her youth with me. Let my lot be separated from hers ; I will suffer alone for her, for my relations, for all."

Gismonda restrained her sobs, and, calling a smile to her lips, though a tear still trembled upon her long lashes, she returned the embrace of the noble Yole, and sweetly said to her :

"You do not and cannot afflict me or any one, you, my only joy, my only and beloved friend. Even if fortune had placed between us the gulf that divides the baron from the vassal; our minds would have felt the mutual sympathy. However you may judge me, I love you, Yole ; I love you as much as anything earthly can be loved, next to God and His saints. But, by the love you bear the great queen of heaven, calm your desperate grief. Oh ! if you knew what inward sorrow afflicts me" (and she pointed to her breast) "at seeing the spring of your life wasting, the flower of your youth withering, the roses fading on your cheeks, your beautiful eyes growing dim, surely, kind as you are, you would try not to give me such distress ! Oh ! your sorrow, if Gismonda may say it, arises not from any anticipated evil, but from something long past. The Count of Provence has not yet left Marseilles ; nor does he appear to me so much to be feared, even if the Vatican should bless him and arm him against us ; and though he were formidable, a peril not yet arrived demands firmness of heart, not tears : for they are useless before misfortune comes, weak and cowardly after. Such the daughter of King Manfred cannot be.—This despair has a far deeper origin : something which is no longer under the control of reason or time,—a deep feeling vainly repressed, perhaps . . ."

"Gismonda !" interrupted Yole, blushing, "there are secrets which cannot be mentioned even between friends ; to seek them in any one is indiscreet and cruel ; to seek them in a sovereign is crime. Rulers have secrets which cannot be revealed to any one ; for to us, more than to the rest of mankind, Heaven has given an exquisite sense of dignity. Count Roger and his noble

wife, besieged on Mount Ætna, had but one royal mantle remaining ; nevertheless they did not proclaim their poverty, but first the one and then the other appeared in public, always dressed in the mantle which royal blood cannot appropriately forego. Had my secret been one that I could reveal, to you sooner than to any one else would I have told it ; but, since I did not tell it to you, beware of seeking to know it. Let this suffice : that were my right hand to reveal it to my left, I would immediately cut it off."

The maiden stood before her confounded, as if she had never before received so severe a reproof. Yole added gravely, "Bring me my scarf, Gismonda ; I feel the need of the open air. All the rest may remain ; Gismonda alone will accompany me into the garden."

Gismonda ran to execute her order ; but, confused, hardly knowing what she did, she took the scarf that Yole had worn when they had heard in court of the death of Corrado, and gave it to her without raising her eyes. Yole saw it, and smiled sadly ; then gently pressing Gismonda's arm, she said, "I accept the omen which comes from the best-beloved of my heart." And taking the scarf, she wrapped it round her, and went towards the royal gardens.

Gismonda, looking up, perceived her mistake, uttered a stifled cry, and followed her mistress, drying her tears.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST KISS.

Il mattin lucido lei sospirosa,
 Lei sospirosa vede dal tacito
 Suo cocchio d'ebano la notte ombrosa ;
 Di tutta l'anima divien signore
 Amor, se sola, se inerme travola :
 Donzelle tenere, temete Amore.

ARMINIO, *Tragedia*.

Shining morn beheld her sighing,
 Sighing still the dusky night,
 In its ebon chariot hieing,
 Saw her on its silent flight.
 Love each bosom captive bindeth,
 That alone unarmed he findeth,
 Gentle maids, beware of Love.

M. G. M.



HE phantoms of glory had abandoned the youthful squire on guard in the royal gardens ; from time to time he sighed deeply, and exclaimed, " O ambition ! O love ! "

As he uttered these words, a slight movement attracted his attention, and, raising his eyes, . . . is not this some illusion of his excited mind ? No : . . . a form more beautiful than fancy can imagine or poetry describe, stood before him. She was completely enveloped in a long black scarf, called *grimpa*, such as, at that time, the Sicilian ladies wore, heightening beauty by its best ornament—modesty. The fluttering of her dress, which revealed the dear outlines of that delicate form, showed that she was mortal ; but the light step, that hardly bent the leaves under her feet, made the spectator doubt whether she belonged most to earth or heaven. The imaginative poet would have called her the Spirit of Melancholy, who, descending gently by night, softly murmurs a lament, so as not to awaken the children of earth, happy only while yielding to sleep, the brother of death.

The Swabian maid, not knowing by whom that sigh was uttered, turned in the direction of the sound to console the mourner:—for in what would kindness of heart consist, if the cry of misery were heard in vain?

“Holy Mary of sorrows!” said she, stepping under the arch, where the rays of the moon did not penetrate, “thy votaries are too numerous! . . . Whose groan did I hear? Speak; . . . if thou art unhappy, know that no one ever departed un comforted from the presence of the daughter of Manfred.”

She waited in vain for a reply; the trembling lips of the squire refused their accustomed office: a faint breathing, but no articulate sound, could only be heard.

“Speak!” reiterated Yole. “It is not an idle wish to know thy misfortunes which move me. If I had not the power to console thee, I would not have the cruelty to ask thy sorrows: for although curiosity may make use of the language of compassion, I, for my part, abhor him who aims at knowing the human heart for the mere pleasure of knowing it. I entreat thee to speak; if thy sorrows can be consoled, thou shalt have consolation from Yole; if they cannot be, await it from time; if even that cannot avail, await it . . .”

“From death!” cried the squire.

What were the secret feelings of Yole, at this voice, at these words? Such as are indescribable by human speech—a thing to be regretted if we had not been endowed with hearts to feel them. And her face? The shadow concealed her face, but it was surely that of a creature hurried from time into eternity.

A long silence ensued. At last Yole, with a broken voice, continued:

“From religion, Rogiero; from the example of the Lord’s patience.”

“Patience! always patience! If we were born to suffer, why were we not gifted with souls stronger to endure, or why were we raised from the dust, which cannot feel when trodden upon, into forms which sink under the weight of oppression?”

“Profound are the mysteries of the Creator. . . . Hope.

... The heavens declare the glory of God, and He cannot but rule justly. ... Endure life, not because it is a blessing, but because death is unspeakable grief."

"But when hope, the life of the soul, perishes, mental death will necessarily follow, though with infinite anguish. Now there remains the choice of enduring it protracted through a series of years, or of concentrating it into one moment, and dying. Heaven forbid that I should blame him to whom Nature has not given strength to see the point of the dagger glitter at his heart, with the same smile with which another welcomes the sight of beauty. But he who can should not be blamed. The way of those who stand on the mountain-top leads to the plain; one, trusting his body to the slope, slides quickly to the end of the path; another reaches it, walking slowly, trying each step, drawing back, and trying again. Which of them wouldst thou praise, which blame? Neither; the one was bold, the other cautious; but the way of both led to the plain, and both accomplished their journey."

"Rogiero, your words sound like the serpent's."

"Princess, I know not if the words of the serpent were wicked, but certainly they were true."

"No—wicked and false. Did he not promise to make us equal to God? Wretched and betrayed that we are! we have learned a hard mystery which our minds cannot understand. Most fearful knowledge! And from the barrenness of our minds dare we rise rebellious to our Creator? But enough; for every argument of salvation is rejected by the hardened heart, and the spirit of evil reasons with more subtlety than the spirit of good, which rather feels the blessing it enjoys than is able to prove it. But let us even suppose that death would release the despairing man: tell me, do you know at what moment hope dies?"

"When present things appear past, and past appear present; when, imagining thy way towards the east, thou findest thyself at the north; when the eyes see unmoved the devastations of the volcano, and the brightness of the meadows in spring; when the hand of every man is raised against thee, and thy hand against every man, and

the blessing of thy father seems a curse, and that of thy sons a reproach; when the lips wishing to breathe a prayer mutter curses, and the heavens seem only the arched roof of an earth that chance has created and chance may destroy . . . or else, the eternal dwelling of the powerful Lord of the thunder . . .”

“Holy Virgin! you blaspheme . . .”

“I say that *then* hope is dead.”

“This is the life of lost souls: you are not fallen into such a despairing state, Rogiero. Your words have sunk into my soul; you will be comforted.”

“What! have you heard all my words? Oh! do not heed them, I was raving. . . . Reason was mad with grief. Heavens! is it fitting for a gentle maiden to listen to the ravings of delirium?”

“I heard, in passing, no word uttered but love—”

“Love!—yes, . . . since you heard it; . . . but desperate love . . . not only, . . . but powerful enough to consume any one that dares to nourish it. A love, the thought of which is a shudder, the consciousness of it crime, the revelation of it death.”

“But these are the attributes of guilt!”

“Men would call it so, for crime appears crime, only because it is followed by punishment; nevertheless in itself it is not guilty, but lofty . . .”

“Rogiero, the troubadour sings often upon his harp, that love can do much more than we can: it is not the first time that beauty and power have crowned valor; nor is there a barrier so strong between lovers, that the true knight cannot break through it with his sword.”

“Be it so; but no lady has girded the sword to my side; no baron has fastened the spurs on my heel; the sword of my king has not touched my brow, nor has his voice admitted me to the order of knighthood. I am an obscure youth, wearing a sword as an ornament, not as a weapon, and my hand, accustomed to hold the bridle of a lady's palfrey, knows not how to wield the lance.”

“You speak not the truth, Rogiero. Do you think that Yole did not recognize you at the tournament of the

Sala verde,* the day of my father's coronation? Did you not wear my colors, the blue scarf which I lost the day before? I would willingly have placed the reward of victory upon your head, but you received only the praises of the ladies in the tournament."

"It was I, . . . yes, . . . it was I: but what mortal power could conquer the man who bore the device of the daughter of Manfred? Look! it rests upon my heart, and will feel its pulsations as long as it continues to beat. I wear it less to conquer in earthly battles than in those of the enemy of souls. Heaven pardon me! but I would not exchange it for the miraculous scarf of Saint Agatha.† I fought, and the idea of fighting for you was sufficient reward. I had never hoped that it would be known to you. Now your words bring me so much happiness, that all the misery of my past life is entirely forgotten.—But why did you not deign me a look? Why did you keep your face always averted? The next day I touched your hand: . . . it trembled; . . . were you offended at my boldness in couching a lance adorned with your colors against the most renowned barons in the kingdom?"

"The triumph of her own colors never offends a high-born lady. But if your lady-love had come and recognized you, her heart would have bled to see you fight for another. . . ."

"Oh! she was present, nor was she displeased . . ."

"She was there!" cried Yole, pressing her hand to her forehead. "Oh! if, being present, she was not displeased, your love is ill returned. Tell me who she is. You were my knight, and the most precious duty of a noble lady is to care for the life of him who has risked it in her honor. Speak, Rogiero; I swear to you, on the faith of the blood of Swabia, as much as in me lies to make you happy."

"Spirit of evil! how cruelly your flatteries tempt us here on earth!"

* A place in which tournaments were held in Palermo.

† The miraculous scarf of Saint Agatha, the mere sight of which stopped the fiery lava of Mount *Ætna* when it threatened *Catania*.

"What are you muttering, Rogiero? Am I importunate? Do you scorn my promises? Does my voice weary you? Ah! pardon me, and attribute it to the great love and sympathy I feel for . . . all who are unhappy."

Thus spoke Yole; and these last words, as they fell from her lips, were so low as hardly to be heard. Sad, dejected, already she was turning to leave the place, when Rogiero, like one beside himself, sprang toward her, and, violently seizing her arm, drew her from under the arch into the moonlight: there, throwing down his helmet, he placed her hand by force upon his uncovered forehead, and, holding it there, he said in a broken voice, "How does my forehead feel, Yole?"

"May all the saints in paradise preserve you!" hesitatingly replied the daughter of Manfred, "it is as cold as sepulchral marble."

"It should be. Hear me, divine maiden; hear the words of one who will know how to punish himself for having spoken. I myself, in the fervor of my prayers, in the raging of my madness, have uttered a wish not granted till this moment. 'Give me,' I cried, to whom I knew not, 'give me one moment of joy, and I will resign my life.' Now, whether by chance or by fate, this moment is come; is passed; nor have I fortitude to endure longer, perhaps in vain, the torment of life. Grant a dying man one outburst of words and tears; they will not offend thee; and even if they did, will not my death be sufficient expiation?"

"Rogiero . . ."

"Yole, dost thou know how long I have borne thine image in my heart? It was there before it began to beat; . . . before I ever saw thee I loved thee. In the path of life I have seen the beautiful daughters of men, and I have turned my eyes to the earth, perceiving that from that they were created. I have seen the haughty one, in the pride of her beauty, and have passed her by. I have seen the blush of timid love, and have not sighed. And I said to myself, 'Heart of iron, is there no grace of love that can move thee?' But my spirit was entranced by an image of beauty, which I had formed from no mor-

tal likeness ; perhaps it had presented itself to my mind, when, restored by repose, and about to return to the functions of life, its dreams are as bright as the roses of dawn. I longed with anguish for the creation of my fancy, and often, in the delirium of my passion, I addressed it in words. 'O form divine!' I said to it, 'dost thou really exist? Oh! do not disappear at the first ray of the rising sun! For thy sake, I will forever renounce its light. Come, heavenly visitant, sylph, gnome,* angel, or demon, come and bless my life, and then Rogiero will love! Yole, . . . one day I saw thee . . . Throne of heaven! Thy features were those of my ideal!'"

"Rogiero," said Yole, drawing herself up with majesty, "are these words which a faithful servant should speak to the daughter of his sovereign?—which the niece of the Empress Constance should hear?"

"I know not, princess, if it is well for you to listen to them, but I know well that it was a crime in me to utter them."

"You are pardoned. . . . Live ; . . . place your love upon some more fortunate maiden, who can return it ; . . . forget me." She said this with a choking voice ; then she added, with more sorrow, "Rogiero, so great is the distance in this world between us, that you can hope to be united to me only in heaven, where, every hateful distinction lost, we shall all be equal in the love of One."

"I knew this, and therefore I loved you without hope, and without hope I disclosed my heart's secrets. It is true that love can do more than we can ; but it is also true that there are barriers impossible to overthrow ; and ye, proud ones, raised by injustice or by chance to the thrones of earth, ye think that ye have omnipotent empire over immortal souls. Ye should know that the soul has wounds that no earthly power can heal! Ought I accuse thee of presumption, in having wished to know an evil that thou couldst not cure, and make thee feel that thou art dust, crowned indeed, but dust? No ; let thy gener-

* Sylphs, spirits of air ; gnomes of earth, as Undines of waters, and Salamanders of fire.

ous intentions and the flattery of power that make thee presumptuous excuse thee ; and more, that I am long since prepared for death, and am perfectly desperate. It seemed to me that I should have died with a weight upon my soul, keeping my love concealed ; now, since I have been able to reveal it, it seems as if the earth would rest more lightly on me in the grave.—Yole, religion and the heart teach us of a second and eternal life ; the mind given up to rash thoughts would deny it. However that may be, what I now ask of thee, with the most earnest prayer of my agonized mind, will gladden either my soul, if it survives my body, or the moment of my departure from living things :—one sigh I beg from thee, one single sigh. Let it be even too brief for time to measure, it will be an eternity of happiness to him for whom it was breathed ; and when, the happy wife of some powerful one of earth, thou shalt see the spoils of conquered nations at the foot of thy throne, and thyself raised to such a height, that next to God, men turn to thee their prayers and vows, and thou wilt hear thy husband call thee the beloved of his heart, and tell thee that 'twas through thee he adorned his brows with laurel, through thee he won the highest prize that glory can bestow on man, that in thy name he fought, and in thy name conquered,—oh ! then give a thought to the poor Rogiero who loved thee so much, and remember with a sigh, ' thus he too loved me ; ' and thou wilt weep, and, at the history of my sad fate, perhaps thy noble husband will also weep. No other joy remains for me in this life but the hope of a tear shed on my grave. Yole, the hour of my death is come ; pray for the departing spirit whose last thoughts cannot be of God."

Pale as one who is led to execution, but firm in his mad design, Rogiero drew his dagger, and was about to plunge it into his heart.

Had not Yole endured the fiercest struggle that woman can or will endure ? Would it have been right for her to bear this last trial, even had she possessed the power ? Her repressed passion broke impetuously forth, for passions partake of the nature of fire ; and the beautiful girl, almost beside herself with grief, hardly knowing what she

did, threw her arms round Rogiero's neck, placing herself between the dagger and his breast. So rapid was the action, that ere he could sufficiently change the direction of the blow, it had struck her right shoulder, cutting through her dress and slightly grazing the skin. The dagger fell, but they remained embraced; their hearts beat together; . . . their tears mingled in falling; . . . their cheeks, their lips touched, and the first kiss of love was given.

But why did they remain thus embraced? Oh! is there a joy on this earth which, in the opinion of lovers, has power, not to surpass, but to equal, their embrace? Where is the pride of birth? Where the fear of punishment? They have nothing more either to fear or to wish. This ecstasy has passed, nor will it ever return. Time, which they have forgotten, has not ceased to run its course, and, mingling that brief moment of happiness with the past, hastens to bring the misfortunes that are to darken the rest of their lives.

Queen Elena, wife of Manfred, although somewhat proud of her noble blood (she was descended from the Comneni of Epirus), was, nevertheless, a most affectionate mother. A daughter and a son had blessed her marriage. Constance, her step-daughter, child of Manfred's first wife, Beatrice of Savoy, already wore the royal crown, having married Peter, son of James, the powerful King of Aragon; but there still remained at home Yole and Manfredino, a most beautiful boy, the hope of his father, hardly ten years old. But Elena's greatest tenderness was for Yole, whom she considered unhappy; nor could she, by any efforts, draw her from her obstinate dejection. She was majestic in appearance, and formerly as beautiful as her daughter Yole, except that "*the thin veil of melancholy*," as the good Pellico says, cast over her, made her to be considered an object of reverence rather than of love. On this same evening, the queen was sitting beside Manfredino's little bed, and when she perceived that the sleep of innocence had come to his eyes, she rose carefully, and, stopping to observe the peace that breathed from the face of that dear cherub, she felt a tear spring to

her eyes ; then bending lightly over him and kissing his forehead, she murmured, "God knows that I love thee also, my sweet little child ; but thy dreams are those of the happy. May the Eternal in His mercy long grant thee these dreams !" Then leaving him to the care of some of her ladies in waiting, she went to the chamber of her beloved daughter.

Learning that Yole was in the garden, she followed her thither, where she met Gismonda. This latter, absorbed in sad thoughts caused by the previous conversation with Yole, had wandered on alone. On the queen inquiring where the princess was, she could only reply confusedly, "She has strayed among the myrtle-bushes." They went together in search of her, and, approaching the great gate which led out of the garden, they perceived her stretched upon the grass, her dress torn and clotted with blood. Queen Elena, thinking her dead, threw herself down beside her in dreadful anxiety to feel if her heart yet beat : it did, though very feebly : then looking at the wound, she perceived that it was a mere scratch, probably caused by the brambles of the bush she had fallen upon in a swoon.

"Run to the fountain, Gismonda, and bring some water," cried she to her maid.

Gismonda went. Queen Elena, sitting down on the grass, drew her daughter into her lap, loosened her dress, and put her hand on her forehead, looking sorrowfully at her. Her eyes were closed, but still she was beautiful. The moon shone on her with a mild radiance, and appeared to take pleasure in illuminating that face gentle as its own light. "Poor child !" said she, sobbing from time to time ; but, when her tears so blinded her that she could no longer see that dear face, she raised her eyes to heaven, saying :

"Accept, O Lord ! this sacrifice of tears : they come from a soul grieved to its very depths. Oh ! from the birth of this unhappy child, I have not known an hour of peace. Poor Yole ! thou wast born for misfortune. . . . But . . . omnipotent God ! if Thou knewest what it is for a mother to see these cheeks, upon which the roses of

youth are not yet blossomed, fade so early away, these limbs, not yet developed, become every day weaker, Thou wouldst not thus afflict me. Poor innocent! Her soul knows no sin, and yet a dreadful punishment oppresses her; a secret torment, which she neither understands nor can drive away, poisons her life, for Thou art mysterious in Thy ways. . . ."

Gismonda now returned from the fountain with her hands bent like a cup; but she had hurried so that only a few drops of water remained in them: nevertheless, sprinkled on Yole's face, they were sufficient to restore her to her senses. The maiden languidly opened her eyes, and, sighing deeply, asked,

"Where am I?"

"In thy mother's arms!"

"Oh! would that I had never been born!"

"What! dost thou repulse thy own mother? O Yole, Yole! cease to give me such sorrows. . . . Speak; tell me; what is it grieves thee so sadly? Lodge thy secrets here in my heart—in the heart of thy mother, who would give her life to see thee happy. Thy sister is so already, and if I could make thee also, the day of my death would be the most fortunate of my life."

"My sister Constance," replied Yole in a solemn voice, "is, and will long be, happy. It has pleased Heaven to separate the cause of the daughter of Beatrice of Savoy from the cause of the daughter of Elena of Epirus. Upon me, . . . upon *us*, weighs a heavy destiny. We shall die unwept, we shall lie unburied, a monument of pity, envy, and cruelty. Why weary yourself, O mother! in seeking within me the cause of my sorrow? Raise your eyes; the cause of *our* sorrow is shining in the sky! . . ."

Elena raised her eyes to the horizon, and saw, or seemed to see, the comet flash its rays threateningly upon her. She could not bear the sight, but, with averted face, passed her arm through that of Yole, and, sadly silent, took the path toward the castle.

Gismonda followed them, softly murmuring a prayer for peace upon the afflicted souls of her beloved mistresses.

CHAPTER IV.

INJURY.

Che temi, animo mio, che pur paventi?
 Accogli ogni tua forza alla vendetta,
 E cosa fa sì inusitata e nuova,
 Che questa etade l'abborrisca, e l'altra
 Che venir dee crederla possa appena . . .
 Sono innocenti i figli? Sieno,—sono
 Figli di traditore.

ORBECCHÉ, *Tragedia Antica.*

Why fearest thou, why tremble thus, my soul?
 Collect thy every faculty for vengeance,
 And be it so unheard of—unexpected,
 That this age shall abhor it, and the next
 Shall hardly have the faith to think it true.
 His sons, perhaps, are guiltless?—yet they are
 Sons of a traitor.

M. G. M.



IN the western part of the castle of Count Caserta was a small, remote room, which no one, however bold, dared to enter. The servants, whenever it was necessary to pass by it during the night, cast lots to determine who should go, and he whose name was drawn always heard the announcement with a shudder; and though he recommended himself to his patron saint, and made the sign of the cross, yet he would always approach it fearfully, without turning his head, with hasty steps, whispering an exorcism. This was not without a cause, since tradition related that there had been committed a most terrible crime; cries, wailings, and frightful howlings were often heard there. There were some, even, who would swear that they had seen a female spectre with a poniard in her breast, from which gushed a stream of blood, crying, with a mournful voice, "My son! my son!" In truth, to the natural horror of the place were added the fanciful fears of ignorant and superstitious minds.

This room appeared internally a little less than ten feet square ; a complete cube. Its walls, ceiling, and floor were all covered with black. In it there was no furniture of any kind, neither chair nor table ; only a lamp, hung with black and suspended from the ceiling, shed around a dismal light. There was no trace of any window. In the southern wall could be seen a recess, of Gothic architecture, and this also black, though whether of marble or of wood the chronicle does not say. The aspect of this recess was such as to suggest that it was destined to be used as an oratory, although it could not be discerned to whom it was dedicated, for there was neither a saint nor a Madonna.

Near the recess stood, motionless, a man of more than common height, wrapped in a tunic of dark cloth fastened tight round his waist. His aspect—oh ! his aspect was such that whoever had beheld it would ever after continually pray that God, in His infinite mercy, would grant him forgetfulness of that countenance. The sensation which the sight inspired cannot be described, except by comparing it to that which would affect the heart of a swimmer if he should hear the wild howl of the sea-monster. The hues of disease and fear were imprinted on his brow ; his cheeks were emaciated, his lips swollen and livid. No spark which would indicate life shone in his sunken, fixed, and glassy eyes. Angels of heaven ! they seemed those of a vampire. His immobility and his listless attitude would give the idea of a corpse placed against the wall to excite to penitence, by such a frightful spectacle, those who entered there to pray ; * but on approaching him, his heavy breathing and a convulsive quivering of his upper lip showed that he was alive.

After he had remained thus for a long time, he began to walk about the room ; but his mind, absorbed in other thoughts, did not direct his movements. His body was the same as we have described above, except that it moved, but its steps had no object. Now he would go straight to the wall, and, knocking against it, he would

* A Sicilian custom.

draw back ; now, having reached the middle of the room, he would turn to the right or left ; often he would turn suddenly round. I have seen the somnambulist and the maniac, but there exists nothing in the world that could equal the horror that this man inspired.

With his eyes still fixed on the ceiling, he moved suddenly toward the recess ; groping about through it, he succeeded in finding a little knob hardly perceptible ; he pulled it, and a secret opening appeared, from which he took a black box finely adorned with silver mountings. Searching then among the folds of his garments, he found the key ; his hands, having become almost paralytic, wandered a long time before he was able to find the key-hole. Succeeding at last in opening the box, a human skull appeared, preserved most neatly, and with the utmost care. He took it out with both hands, and, placing it upon a table in the recess, fell heavily before it, his face toward the ceiling and his arms crossed in the attitude of prayer.

He had remained fully an hour in this position, when, lowering his head, he gazed intently upon the skull. His eyes, before glassy, burned now with a terrible fire ; soon they became red, sparkling, but no tears fell from them ; perhaps his despair had exhausted even this last comfort of misfortune. His lips endeavored to utter words, but could send forth only inarticulate sounds. This was the hour of the *hurricane* of the soul, if I may be allowed the expression. Such deep convulsions, like everything else out of nature's course, cannot last long, but, like the hurricane, they leave, wherever they pass, indelible traces, and everything entirely changed. This man, who at first had seemed like a corpse recalled to some function of life by force of necromancy, now had become all motion and activity. His face, pale at first, burned now with a feverish glow ; his limbs had become convulsed ; he strained himself continually in different attitudes, although he dared not rise from before that skull, which he seemed to worship.

Nor was it long before those indistinct wailings approached to something like human speech ; then, had any

one been courageous enough to listen, he would have heard these words :

“Behold ! here were those lips that smiled so sweetly ; . . . the naked jaw-bones seem to smile still ; yes, . . . but with the smile of the serpent, when, having deceived the mother of men, he heard her, with all future generations, condemned to death. Here were set the sad yet beautiful eyes ; . . . here the white forehead and rosy cheeks. . . . Now what remains of so much beauty ? Naked bones. . . . The fairest part of the body was consumed by quick dissolution ; . . . the bones remain ; . . . the bones, a frightful witness of death.—Oh ! in pity to me, . . . in pity to thyself, why didst thou not feign ? . . . My soul groans, horribly oppressed. I lie upon a bed of fire, from which I cannot rise, and upon which, in spite of all the torments of this life and eternal perdition, I would willingly lie. . . . O bitter fruit of revenge not yet fully accomplished ! I cannot give up my portion in heaven, for it has long since been closed against me ; nor the intellect, which is half lost ;—but I would consent to be eternally transported by the winds of earth, dashed by the angry waves against the rocks of the sea, tossed about for countless ages in the abysses of chaos, burnt perpetually by the fire of heaven, tormented with all the anguish which human or infernal mind can imagine, could I but obtain complete revenge. . . . This wish will grieve the soul that dwelt in this skull. . . . Oh ! this is a new torment, and at the same time a new incitement for me.”

While he thus wildly talked to himself, the door of the room was softly opened, and a man richly dressed entered, who, placing himself unobserved beside the kneeling one, stood a long time without speaking, listening to the words which we have just recited.

The masters of the art say that the exact description of the appearance and dress of a person, which they call *prosopography*, helps wonderfully in riveting attention to the narrative. We know not how much truth there may be in this, but, as the masters always deserve respect, we do not hesitate for a moment to describe this new person-

age, protesting that should it not be agreeable to some of our readers, they should attribute the fault to the masters, who taught me this rhetorical figure.

This new person, then, who, as I have said, silently and almost stealthily entered the room where the other was lamenting, was about five feet high, more or less, very slender, and made even more so by vicious habits. Perhaps he did not number many years, yet he appeared to have arrived prematurely at that point at which, ascent being no longer possible, decline necessarily commences. His head, somewhat bald upon the forehead, was I know not whether adorned or disfigured by a few straight, red hairs, each one of which seemed to rise purposely in an opposite direction from that of its neighbor, presenting a perfect image of that head which a modern poet with so much force of expression describes :

“E'en as the grain, in wild confusion cast,
Tossed by the sudden fury of the blast.”*

He never held his head erect when in the presence of any one ; only from time to time he would catch a stealthy, sidelong glance, and immediately, as if afraid that his small gray eyes would reveal the thoughts of his heart, he would lower them. His lips, closely compressed, gave the assurance to every close observer of the human countenance that he feared lest, in spite of himself, some word might escape which would lead him directly to the gallows. It is true, however, that a habit which he could not check forced them sometimes to stretch towards his ears, and his cheeks to fold in most minute wrinkles : then he seemed to smile. May all the saints in heaven preserve us from such a smile ! He spoke slowly and bitterly, and because the tranquillity of his own mind was destroyed, he enjoyed exceedingly destroying that of others. If at that time the angel of darkness had taken a fancy to appear in the world in a

* “Ad un campo di biada già matura,
Nel cui mezzo passata è la tempesta.”

suitable form, surely he could not have imagined a more appropriate one than that of Count della Cerra.

His dress consisted of a coat of green velvet, richly embroidered with silver and lined with fur, reaching to his knee and opened at the sides; a belt, in the centre of which was the eagle of King Manfred, of massive silver upon blue enamel, bound it to his waist; at the breast it was also open, and the sleeves did not come below the elbow. His underdress was of silk of various colors, and adorned with numerous silver buttons; the sleeves were narrow, and reached the wrist. The linen which covered a great part of his breast and shoulders was a work of marvellous embroidery. A close-fitted crimson cloth covered his thin legs. His shoes also were red, very pointed, fastened in the middle with a silver button. This was very nearly his costume, although, for the sake of brevity, we have left many things unmentioned: such as the cap, in the shape of an imperial crown, adorned with beautiful feathers; the gold chain, by which a rich medallion was suspended on his breast; and a sword of extreme length, with its hilt in the form of a cross, according to the custom of those who went to the Holy Land, who used it thus, that at the hour of prayer, the sword fixed in the sand, presenting the symbol of faith, might incite them to the conquest of the country of our Redeemer, who died for our salvation upon this instrument of pain.

The kneeling one, turning his head, saw beside him this man, who, enjoying his misery, had not been able to repress that sardonic smile of which we spoke before; his hand rose involuntarily to his head, and he began the sign of the cross, which he in vain endeavored to complete; then he lowered his head, and murmured . . . perhaps a prayer; but certainly it was pronounced with the bitterness of a curse. A moment after raising his face again, he met once more the face of him, who knew not how to express his compassion but by his smile, and he turned his glance back to the skull, . . . then to him, . . . then to the skull, . . . and then to him again; nor did that smile cease. . . . Suddenly starting to his feet, he grasped

him by the throat, and, furiously prostrating him upon the ground, he placed his knees upon his breast, and made a motion to strangle him. The life of Count della Cerra would soon have ended, if chance had not helped him. The skull, shaken by his fall, dropped to the ground, making a noise which sounded like a lamenting cry, and rolled directly under the eyes of him who held the count by the throat ; forgetting everything else, he relinquished his hold, ran eagerly to pick it up, looked at it carefully to see if it had received any injury, and, quick as lightning, replaced it in the box, and then in the recess. In the meantime, Count della Cerra having risen, arranged his disordered garments, showing in his livid face the fear caused by the danger which he had thus escaped.

"Count di Caserta," said Count della Cerra, after a little while, approaching the door of the room, "tell me, if you please, how would you treat your enemies, if you behave thus towards your friends and faithful servants?"

"Anselmo," replied Count di Caserta, "have I told you to mock my misery and grief, and excite in my soul a rage fiercer than my remorse? Complain of yourself, for you know the passions that rave within me ; they have been burning for a long time—but my heart is not yet entirely ashes."

"Complain of nature, Count di Caserta, that made me smile when others weep. But does it seem to you a thing to weep at, to see you tormenting yourself every night before an inanimate skull, that cannot hear your anathemas or your prayers, and can neither curse nor pardon you? I have already told you a thousand times, and I now repeat it, you will lose your reason."

"And is it worth preserving? Would it be an evil to lose it? Remorse lives with it, and would survive it, if it were lost. Once I had it entire, capable of comprehending everything, nor was I less unhappy than I am ; nor now, that I have more than half lost it, do I feel any happier."

"But come, allow me for once to remove those bones, the sight of which is daily destroying your reason. Consider, finally, that it was the head of a woman who betrayed her nuptial vows, and bore in her bosom . . ."

"Be silent ! as you value your life . . . be silent ! . . . Your office against this creature ended with the blow that took away her life. I commanded you to be her assassin, not her detractor. Enough ! I have punished her as guilty, now I love to feign her innocent."

"When I, a young man, studied in the University of Frederick, I heard that *he who desires the most must necessarily desire the least*. You gave me the right to investigate her guilt, and would you now deny me the right to question her fame ?"

Count di Caserta leaned against the wall, as if about to swoon ; but Count della Cerra immediately assisted him, and added,

"Come ! let us talk no more of this. Count, if the prayer of a faithful servant has any weight with you, abandon, for mercy sake, this frightful place ; give to the earth what belongs to the earth—the relics of the dead. You know that now, more than ever, it is important that we should be on our guard, and keep our faculties awake. By your present course of action, I greatly fear that your designs of vengeance against *him* may end in your own insanity."

"Ah ! You care so very much, then, about my revenge, and the preservation of my intellect ? Many thanks ! . . . many thanks ! . . . Count della Cerra, I have often told you that you are as subtle and as fraudulent as the spirit of evil ; yet with me your craftiness avails you not. I have known you long : abandon the idea of deceiving me ; you need not give yourself the trouble to speak so artfully. You fear that I should lose my reason, and you fear it on my account ? The splendor of your house had decayed, and the present times furnished you no opportunity of restoring it, either by public or by private virtue. You reinstated it, however, in its ancient splendor. I made you grand chamberlain of the kingdom, rich and powerful ;—you were already so wicked, that you dared not charge me openly with your own crimes. You fear that I should lose my reason, and you fear it on my account ? And have you no fear that, in the frenzy of my anguish, I might, with a single word,

reveal that which would bring the axe on both our necks? And have you no fear that, having become an object of compassion and mockery, I may no longer have the power of bequeathing to you that wealth which I cannot leave the son whom your hands have murdered?"

"Count, why labor so sedulously to unveil the human heart? Perhaps your doubts are true, perhaps false. Is it prudent to wear out one's reason and time in a study, of which doubt is the least bitter fruit? God did not allow Himself to be known by men, and enveloped Himself in the mantle of the deep heavens. Do you wish to penetrate the heavens, and investigate the thoughts of God? And even though you wished to do so, would it be in your power? Nature has not willed that our hearts should be laid bare, and has therefore wrapped them in a covering of flesh and bones. Can even your boldest thought pierce this bulwark of clay? Be content, then, with effects, and disregard causes. I have said all this, not that you might have a better opinion of me, but a less opinion of yourself, when you learn that your son still lives."

Count di Caserta became as pale as death; he staggered, and remained a long time absorbed in thought; then he slowly approached Count della Cerra, grasped his arm with his left hand, and with his right made so significant a gesture, that speech, that noble attribute which distinguishes man from any other animal, seemed almost unnecessary. Count della Cerra, much as he endeavored, could not so entirely repress that smile of his but that once or twice it wrinkled his face; still he contained himself, and said,

"And what, Count di Caserta? Are you so soon afraid at having become again a father? Have you not said that he is your son? Say not then that I killed him, and that the 'cursed thirst for gold' directs the motions of my soul. Presumptuous that you are, renounce the knowledge of the human heart!"

"He lives! You have said it. . . . Then you have betrayed me? Go, Anselmo, go, for the love of Heaven, kill him before this night is over; . . . take advantage of

the few remaining hours of darkness. He . . . he is a monument of sin ; . . . he is not my son, . . . he is not my son ; . . . he must die ! ”

“ He must live, Count di Caserta ! ”

“ How long is it since Count della Cerra has refused to be an assassin ? I will find him out, I will kill him myself this very night. ” And so saying, he rushed towards the door ; but Count della Cerra detained him, exclaiming with a loud voice,

“ You must listen to me first. ”

Here they began a very hasty conversation, in so low a tone that one could not have heard them at the distance of a few feet ; but quick and fierce were their gesticulations, terrible their aspect. At length they seemed to have come to a mutual understanding ; then Count della Cerra, with his usual horrible contortion of face, asked exultantly, “ Count, how do you like my plan ? ”

“ It seems to me a plan, ” replied Count di Caserta, “ that present and future ages will curse—a plan which the narrator of old histories will avoid placing in his chronicle, as too fabulous ; a plan, than which Lucifer himself, with all his infinite power of evil, could not have imagined a greater. Treachery and parricide, committed for the sake of avenging the father, this was a thought worthy to be devised by Count della Cerra. ”

“ And to be listened to by Count di Caserta. ”

After these words, Count di Caserta dismissed Anselmo, who, bowing in an obsequious manner, departed.

CHAPTER V.

DECEPTION.

Ne diè Natura, è vero,
 La lingua perchè serva
 A palesar del cuor gli occulti sensi ;
 Ma l'artificio uman così l'adopra,
 Che non gli manifesta, anzi gli asconde,
 E ben io so ch'è folle
 Chi mirar crede entro la voce l'anima.

CLEOPATRA, *Tragedia del Cardinale Delfino Patriarca d'Aquileia.*

Dame Nature gave the tongue, 'tis thought,
 The heart's hid meaning to reveal ;
 But human cunning so has wrought,
 That now its use is to conceal.
 And he must simple be, indeed,
 That through the voice the soul would read,

M. G. M.



If life is a blessing, why is it ever taken away from us? If a curse, why was it ever bestowed? Oh! the hour of death comes with unspeakable agony. I, who, by a happy natural disposition, can, without sorrow and without joy, look upon the contest between death and life, have looked upon the man killed by the sword: his hair was on end, his eyes glaring, his mouth open in the act of threatening, all his limbs in the attitude of defence. I have looked upon the man killed by the bullet: his eyes were heavy, his face dejected, like one worn out by long suffering. Finally, I have looked upon the power of mortal disease on the young, and on the old: in the former, life struggled with vigor proportioned to its powers, and his last moments were terribly painful; in the latter, whose breath would hardly have moved a feather, or dimmed the glass placed to his mouth, death seemed to rage less furiously, and laid its icy hand very gently on his heart to stay its beatings. But in him killed by the sword, and in him killed by the bullet, in

the youth and in the old man, . . . in all I have seen the fierce struggle of agony : . . . the rolling of the eyes, straining for the light ; . . . the quick shiver over the skin, precursor of total stillness ; . . . the great drop distilled by the brain falling down the pallid cheek ; . . . the contraction of all the limbs ; . . . life, with the last gasp, concentrated into a single moment, . . . and, . . . with one sigh, the heart has ceased to beat ; eternal immobility chains all the fibres : man has become dust. Oh ! bitter, bitter is the moment when life ceases !

But more bitter to Rogiero seemed that moment when, hearing steps approaching and a voice sounding ever nearer, he was obliged to release himself from the arms of her whom he had loved so much and so hopelessly. Heavens ! her forehead was as cold as marble ; . . . her limbs rigid ; . . . nor could she stand without assistance ;—and her mouth ? A faint breathing announced that she still lived.—The voices and steps come nearer every moment. Shall Rogiero lay her down upon the grass, or keep her ever clasped to his heart ? Truly it would be a strong proof of love to abandon her thus senseless, to an unknown person ! But to have her in his arms is a crime. Rogiero would refuse neither the shame of the crime nor the pain of the punishment, if it were only permitted him to place her in the care of her maidens or her mother. Suddenly, taught more by the many crimes of men than by years, the thought comes to his mind that the beautiful lily grows, envied by all ; he sees the loathsome reptile panting to contaminate that unsullied purity ; he hears the malice of base-born minds. A generous feeling elevates him ; he conquers the present passion, lays Yole gently on the ground, turns his eyes upon her, joins his hands, looks up to heaven, and flies without a sigh.

Certainly it cannot be doubted but that, in any case, the adieu would have been a silent one, for their passion could not be expressed in words ; nevertheless, had Yole been conscious, she would have seen a look that could never have been effaced from her memory : a look which revealed the desire of things unattainable, the irrevoc-

cable oath never, through any events or times, to swerve from his settled purpose, and the consciousness of living and dying equally without hope. It was, without doubt, a great mercy that she was spared that look : it would have hastened the loss of reason, to which the wretched girl was condemned even from her birth.

Meanwhile Rogiero, returning to his post under the cloisters, could not bring his mind to dwell on the events that had just happened, for his heart, straying among those memories, willingly gave itself up to the rush of feelings.

While thus musing, he heard a footstep, which seemed approachinfi ; he listened, and, when it was near enough, he demanded in a loud voice, "Who goes there?"

"San Germano preserve you!" replied a man, of rather rough features, but of vigorous aspect, covered with armor such as the men-at-arms of King Manfred used to wear ; "good guard to you, Rogiero !"

"Oh ! is it you, Roberto?" said Rogiero, recognizing the voice ; "what evil spirit brings you here at this hour?"

"Yourself."

"Thanks for your politeness, Roberto ; such a friend as you is welcome at any hour, particularly at that of guard."

"Rogiero, I have many things to say to you."

"And I, as you see, have time and patience to listen. Say on," said Rogiero, looking as if he did not intend to pay much attention to what the soldier was going to tell him, and continuing his walk.

"Young man," said Roberto mysteriously, sitting down, "I can with a single word render you motionless for a longer time than you would like ; but come, sit down beside me, and, above all, let us speak low, that no one may hear us."

Rogiero, scarcely knowing why, obeyed without replying. The soldier continued : "Rogiero, have you thought over what the Saracen astrologer, Ben-Hussein, predicted to you last month?"

"Santa Rosalia ! they were perfect absurdities. I have entirely forgotten them."

"If you thought them absurdities, why did you listen to them? You have interrogated the stars, and they have told you the truth; you have forgotten it, but there is some one who remembered it for you."

"So much the better. It seems to me that he spoke of *Sagittarius* . . ."

"Yes, you were born under that constellation, and your horoscope says that you are to undertake long journeys. Your palm was also consulted; in fact, what says the wise King Solomon? 'Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.' The art showed *the line of greatness red and deep*, but the *line of life* appeared suddenly interrupted, and made the astrologer fear that a violent and untimely death . . ."

"Roberto," said Rogiero, rising impatiently, "do you think to frighten me? Why seek to try my courage? Have you yet to learn that my cheek pales not at danger?"

"Young man, what you say is true, but you are too impetuous," replied Roberto, forcing him to reseal himself; and then, lowering his voice, he asked him,

"Do you know your father?"

"I? No."

"Do you know who saved your life?"

"I do not know when it was ever in danger."

"It was."

"Do you know, then? And why did you not tell me before?"

"Why does night come to drive the light from heaven?"

"Instead of answering, you ask me another question, Roberto."

"Why does night come to drive the light from heaven?"

"Why? Because the laws of nature compel it."

"And the power of men, strong as Lucifer, compelled me."

"But now, if you are permitted, tell me. Who is my father? What is he doing? What is his condition?"

Was it by his own will, or by that of others, that he let me languish in ignorance till now ? ”

Roberto did not answer a word. Then Rogiero, in a beseeching manner, resumed :

“ Speak, Roberto, speak ; your silence rends my heart.”

• “ You ask me many questions, to which I will answer two things. Your father is living, but is at the point of death. Your condition will be shown you to-night.”

“ When ? In what place ? See, I am ready to follow you ! ”

“ Come,” said Roberto ; and Rogiero, rising, had already taken a step forward, when he stopped suddenly, saying,

“ No, . . . it is impossible now. Wait, Roberto, till I am relieved from guard : . . . it will be very soon : . . . otherwise I cannot without failing in my duty to my king, and causing a suspicion of treachery.”

“ Suspicion ! Indeed, you *must* betray him. Before this night is over, you, eager for vengeance, will place yourself at the head of the betrayers of him whom you now guard from treachery, and the aim of your life will be the death of Manfred.”

“ Miscreant, begone ! or my lance will make acquaintance with your blood ; you would deceive, betray me, coward ! And I, who almost allowed myself to be deceived ! . . . Begone ! ”

“ I betray you ! I deceive you ! ” said the soldier, without showing the slightest emotion. “ A fine person you are to deceive ! Young man, do not take so much upon yourself. Your obscurity, your misery, your nothingness, even more than your acuteness, save you from any attempt at deception. I have fulfilled my commission to you ; only I should like to remind you that when you distrust a man, it is better not to tell him so to his face. The moments of your father's life are numbered. . . . At this very minute it may be too late to go. Good-night.”

“ Stop, in the name of the Holy Sepulchre ! grant me a moment. I have not the honor of my ancestors to

preserve, for I belong to no family : . . . I have only my own ; but it is as dear to me as if it had been transmitted to me from Robert Guiscard, or from Henry the Fowler. But my father is dying, you say ; and if I do not see him now, I shall never see him more, and shall remain in the ignorance in which I was born. . . . But my honor, my honor ! Roberto ! oh ! in mercy do not deceive me."

"Poor soul ! Do you really know what is honor, or what disgrace ?" interrupted Roberto. "Look at the barons of Manfred's court ; they are great, because their ancestors betrayed William the Norman : their sons will be great in the court of Anjou, because they will betray Manfred the Swabian."

"Ah ! this is a terrible truth."

"You will learn others, Rogiero, in the path of life. But come now, *if you wish* ; by making haste, you may return, *if you wish*, or if it appears to you better to be the slave of a tyrant than the avenger of a father." And so saying, Roberto walked away.

Rogiero still stood hesitating, looking now at the spear which he must abandon, now at the departing soldier. "There is a destiny," he exclaimed at length ; "destiny governs us all. In vain will one endeavor to go to the left ; he will find himself at the right, if it was written in the skies ; and, since resistance is useless, it is better to throw myself blindly into the arms of the fate that governs my days." And throwing down his spear, resolute as one who is henceforth prepared to face the worst, he followed his guide, and joined him at the entrance of the cloisters.

"Roberto," said Rogiero, as they walked along, "have you ever heard the word of God ?"

"Of course !"

"Have you ever thought of the reward of him who sold the blood of Christ for thirty pieces of silver ?"

"Of course. A halter in this life, and eternal damnation in the next. But if I am not mistaken, you still doubt my good faith, Rogiero ; and I tell you that I have no intention of making you follow me, for my commission

ends with the message that I carried to you : you are at perfect liberty to stay, for I neither have nor wish to use the means of compelling you to come."

"Oh, yes! You place before a heated fancy an object that can powerfully excite the principal passion of the mind, and then say that we are at perfect liberty not to follow it, that we have the power to resist every enticement! This appears to me a cruel mockery of our nature."

"Then have more faith in me, squire ; is there in the world no more fidelity ?"

While they thus conversed, they had gone some few steps from the cloisters, from which, as Roberto ceased speaking, issued a voice which said, "*No more fidelity.*"

"*Croce di Dio !*" cried Roberto, stepping back in alarm, and making the sign of the cross ; "did you hear, Rogiero? These are illusions of the foul fiend. Santa Rosalia preserve us!" And then he continued in a lower voice, "I wonder that, a hundred times when a word of reproof might with reason have been addressed to me, I have never heard anything, and now it is heard, when," and here he raised his voice, "no one can say to me, 'Thou art a traitor !' "

And the voice replied, "*Thou art a traitor.*"

"This is more than I can bear. O man or demon, thou liest in thy throat !"

And the voice, "*Thou liest in thy throat.*"

The soldier lowered his visor, drew his sword, and, wrapping his cloak around his left arm, prepared to rush into the cloisters. Rogiero, who, reasonably, had not laid aside every doubt of the faith of this man, stood carefully observing him ; he saw the sudden terror, the effect of an uneasy conscience, and hesitated more than ever ; but when he perceived that the feeling of honor, conquering superstitious fear, led his hand to his sword, and excited him to worthy revenge, he decided, laying aside every suspicion, to trust him entirely ; therefore, knowing by experience whence the voice proceeded, he stopped Roberto, and, laughing, said to him,

"Hold, good lance ; any attempt of yours against the

being from whom that voice proceeded would be utterly useless."

"We'll see that," replied Roberto, roughly pushing Rogiero aside, and still about to rush in.

"Stop, stop! do you not see that it is the echo? Has it not repeated the end of your own sentences? With whom would you fight, if the voice is your own?"

"St. George! I believe you are right, Rogiero," said Roberto, and upon that he tried to laugh, wiping his forehead, damp with fear. "What does the proverb say? Nature cannot be conquered; drive her out by the door, and she will return by the window." Silence following these words, Roberto, as if he feared not arriving in time, set to work to recover by speed the time he had lost in conversation. Rogiero observed that, nevertheless, he was careful to follow the least observed rather than the shortest paths; and often, as if fearful of losing his way, stopped, and, examining the place, made a signal, which, repeated immediately from distance to distance, grew fainter, till at last it was almost lost to the ear. Thus they walked on for some time, when Roberto, stopping short, turned to Rogiero and said:

"Squire, do you trust me?"

"Roberto, let me speak to you frankly. Your question is asked in a time and place that induce rather a feeling of suspicion than of security. And then, you must see that whatever my feelings might be, it would be expedient for me, just now, to say that I trusted you."

"I believe you are right. Since it is so, permit me to blind your eyes."

"Do so; I have no reason to fear you. I have never done you any harm; and as for me, however great human wickedness may be, I will never believe that it is so great as to shed innocent blood."

"Your heart is better than your tongue. Was it not you who just now brought forward the example of Judas? Poor youth!" he continued with emotion, "may God keep you in such sentiments, and may He pardon me for being an example of the contrary." This last sentence was murmured low, and seemed forced from him by that

mysterious power that a good conscience has over wickedness. To be sure, the affair in which he was now engaged did not appear a bloody one, for his face was calm, his voice firm, nor did his limbs tremble, as generally happens to people of his description when they are about to commit a crime.

Meanwhile, Rogiero, his eyes bandaged, took Roberto's arm, who conducted him with tender care along a crooked and unknown road. Going about five hundred steps farther, they stopped. The guide gave a signal, striking his hands; then a bridge was lowered, which, in spite of the care taken to conceal the noise, Rogiero heard descend. The guide asked him to walk on, and coming upon the bridge, he perceived that it was paved with stones like the street which they had just left, and this evidently on purpose, that blindfolded persons who went over it might not perceive it. Rogiero, however, whether it was that he was endowed by nature with more acute perceptions, or that there had been some carelessness in lowering it, noticed, but without appearing to do so, that there certainly was a bridge, and went on.

After he had, with many precautions, traversed a marvellous number of corridors and rooms, he heard a voice different from his conductor's, which said to him, in a tone of command,

"You may take off your bandage."

He obeyed; and, able once more to use his eyes, he looked curiously around to examine the place. It was not in the least remarkable: he saw a very large room with an arched roof; it was partially illuminated by a lamp, which, shedding all its light on Rogiero, threw into the shade two men seated at a table at a little distance from him. Rogiero, looking if his guide were still with him, perceived that he had left him on entering that room. He then turned all his attention to the two remaining persons. They appeared very simply dressed, nothing about them indicating either rank or wealth; there was nothing noticeable about them except that they kept their faces covered with a veil of black cloth.

He who, as far as could be judged, had the most au-

thority, rose from his seat and extended his hand towards Rogiero, as if about to speak ; but he endeavored in vain to utter a word, for a sudden trembling seized him, and he sank back upon the seat from which he had risen. Then the second, as if wishing to take advantage of this emotion, quickly commenced :

“The many cautions adopted in bringing you here, Rogiero, must serve less to show our distrust of you than the imminence of the danger in which we are all involved. Do not wonder at what I say ; it will soon be clear to you. In the meantime, be assured of this, that if the fact which we are about to reveal to you were known to *him* who has the power of the sword, our heads would certainly fall, and yours would not be safe. Nor do we say this to frighten you ; if you had been capable of a feeling of cowardice, we should not have brought you to hear a secret which no one compels us to disclose. We have been observing you for a long time ; the most hidden secrets of your heart are known to us ; we know all ; . . . nor have we perceived anything in you that was not high-minded and generous. It is true nevertheless that we should have preferred to keep you in ignorance of all, till, the danger being over, you might have reaped the rich fruits. And this not because we think lightly of you, but for the great love we feel for you. But now, as happens every day, according to the old proverb, Prudence warps and Fortune weaves : it did not please Heaven to bring about what man had proposed. The approaching and, alas ! too certain death of the principal person engaged in this affair renders vain all our designs, and compels us to do what we abhor.”

“Is not this dying man my father ?” asked Rogiero, greatly agitated.

“Calm yourself: your affairs demand a heart that can feel, a hand that can execute, a face that can dissimulate. Tell me, do you know the history of the house of Swabia ?”

“The house of Swabia ? The history of that family has always been more pleasing and interesting to me than any other ; but, although not many years have passed

over my head, there is not a noble house in Italy whose origin and history I do not know."

"Then you will remember, Rogiero, that the Emperor Frederick II. had many sons, and you will remember also that the eldest was Henry, chosen, during his father's lifetime, Emperor of Germany, now commonly known as Henry *the Cripple*—for the malignity of men is not satisfied with the misfortunes of the oppressed, but wishes them to be either ridiculous or infamous. This unhappy prince, not having a very strong will, and being a most devoted lover of our religion, excited by the entreaties of Gregory IX. and of many enemies of his father, thought that it would be an act pleasing to the Eternal, if he should free the empire of Germany from the rule of an excommunicated sovereign, which Frederick II. was. Alas! that, led astray by evil counsels, he did not remember that God abhors parricidal wars, and that His curse rests upon the house of the impious one who dares, in the wickedness of his heart, to raise his hand against the author of his days! As soon as Frederick learned the bitter news, he left Italy, quickly crossed the Adriatic, and reached Worms. The people watched in terror to see who first, father or son, would dare to unsheath the sword. Eternal pity would not permit this disgrace to be registered in the voluminous history of human crimes. It pleased God not to harden the heart of the son: pale, desponding, less fearful of punishment than urged by remorse, with bare feet, shaven head, dressed in sackcloth, a halter round his neck, and holding a cross in his hand, he came to Worms heedless of ridicule; he passed through the crowd of people who had been awe-struck by his guilt, and, bitterly weeping, threw himself for mercy at his father's feet, and conjured him not to spare the punishment that he felt his crime had too well merited, but only to bless him, and call him by the dear name of son before he died. In vain did offended pride endeavor to harden itself; in vain did the betrayed paternal authority seek to remain severe: the tears gushed from Frederick's eyes, and his heart felt all the truth of the sentence, 'Joy is the daughter of sorrow.' He descended

from the throne, threw his arms lovingly round his son's neck, and, kissing his eyes, his forehead, his mouth, called him again his beloved son. Oh! that would have been true peace and lasting pardon; but that, among the wild animals that nature has formed, there are men, O Rogiero! and unfortunately too many of them, who hate a serene sky; who live upon gall and poison, and would willingly renounce ease, life, in order to revel in the sight of human misery, and to laugh at its groans; for while such a limited power to aid others has been given us, we have more than enough to injure. That son of wickedness lived, and still lives, O Rogiero! who, exciting every moment suspicions in Frederick's heart, and giving to the most innocent of Henry's actions an appearance of crime, surrounding him with a thousand snares and innumerable spies, now by slander, now by compassion. . . . But why do I waste time in revealing, one by one, all the powers of infamy? They are more than can be numbered, or than honor can understand. In fine, his perfidy was so successful that Frederick, cruelly enraged against his own blood, recalled that unfortunate son from the throne of Germany, delivered him to that wicked one, that in some prison of Apulia he might make him consume the remainder of his life, with "the bread of adversity and the water of affliction." It was not long before the death of Henry was announced to Frederick, which, opening the spring of paternal affection, caused him to feel such bitter grief at his excessive rigor, that, shutting himself up, he determined to die of hunger; but his most faithful courtiers, speaking to him through the door, with the utmost difficulty induced him to lay aside that cruel intention, and to take food. The grief of Frederick could not be concealed; a royal letter, dictated by the illustrious secretary Piero delle Vigne, and sent to the Sicilian clergy, said, 'However great may be the errors of a son, they cannot diminish the sorrow that nature excites in a father's heart at his death.' And he ordered that he should be honored with magnificent funeral rites, thinking thus to make restitution, by vain pomp, to a soul which he

had condemned to sink under disgrace. But Henry lived ; Frederick and his cruel counsellor were deceived."

"Does Henry *the Cripple* live?" cried Rogiero, who, listening with fixed attention to this narration, could not suppress a gesture of wonder.

"Our lot here below would be too hard to endure, my son, if the mercy of the Creator had not granted us some of those compassionate spirits born to restrain the crimes with which, from day to day, our wicked race augments the load of God's vengeance. Providence caused one of those blessed ones to be taken into the confidence of Frederick's counsellor: to him were these atrocious mysteries revealed; he was ordered by the counsellor to go to Apulia; then, by treachery, or by violence, or in some way or other, to kill Henry, and then, in all haste, to bring the news to court. The messenger departed; he returned with the news of Henry's death. But Henry had been saved."

"Oh! that I might be the first to announce it to Manfred! Certainly the king's joy will be great at such happy news," interrupted Rogiero.

"And the son of the unhappy Henry," continued the mysterious man without heeding him, "persecuted by cruel ambition, escaped death by the substitution for him of a child who had died by natural illness."

"And does he live?" asked Rogiero.

"He lives."

"Why, then, not reveal him to Manfred?"

"Because the scorn of men and the anger of God are the reward for betraying innocence."

"Manfred would restore to him his royal estate."

"Manfred would kill him before any one knew a word of it, to spare himself the expense of the funeral."

"Whoever you are," exclaimed Rogiero in a terrible voice, "who speak so wrongfully of my king, I declare solemnly that the only reason I do not avenge him in this place is that you are not suitably armed. Nevertheless, from this moment I declare you a liar and a disloyal knight, and I am ready to sustain to the death, with lance, sword, or dagger, on foot or on horseback,

King Manfred of Swabia, the noblest knight of Christendom !”

“ I accept the challenge, and substitute a champion.”

“ Let the champion advance,” said Rogiero, drawing his sword. “ Who is he ? ”

“ Although in chivalry it is not lawful to demand the name of the knight, I will nevertheless satisfy you : he is the son of Henry, the nephew of Manfred.”

“ Where is he ? ”

“ In this room.”

“ I do not see him. Is it your silent companion who boasts of being Henry’s son ? ”

“ He is not of so illustrious a race.”

“ Then ? ” said Rogiero, looking round.

“ Then it is . . . yourself ! . . . ”

“ I ! grandson of the Emperor Frederick ! ” cried Rogiero, confounded, and the sword fell from his trembling hand. “ But why,” he resumed, breathing with difficulty, “ why not have declared it to me before ? Why, instead of so basely suspecting King Manfred, did you not tell him of my existence ? Time may have lessened his hatred, if indeed the king ever cherished such a feeling towards his brother Henry, and he would have received me with the love with which the dearest relations are received . . . ”

“ Time consumes the heart that hates, but hatred—oh ! hatred ceases not even with the beatings of the heart. It descends into the tomb, and agitates even the dust of the dead. It is the only immortal passion granted to the soul confined in its ‘ mortal coil.’ But hatred is not the question ; we are speaking of cold, cruel, calculating ambition.”

Although Rogiero’s mind had long been accustomed to vehement emotions, it could not endure what we have related without, for a few minutes, giving way before it. Balls of fire seemed to strike his eyes ; everything in the room seemed to be whirling round ; an indefinable weakness seized him, which, in spite of himself, completely overcame him.

The man who had been speaking stood motionless, looking at him, as if he took pleasure in witnessing his

anguish ; but he who had remained silent sprang eagerly from his seat, supported him as he was falling, lavished every care upon him, and, when he perceived that he was recovering, he asked him in a stifled voice, "Do you feel better?"

"Oh ! it is nothing," replied Rogiero, "nothing at all." And recovering himself by an effort, he freed himself from the other's arms. "A momentary confusion in my mind ; it is entirely past now."

"He repulses me !" said that silent one, with a sound that resembled more the cry of a wild animal than a human voice, and he slowly returned to his seat.

"Rogiero, before speaking to you, our intention was to lead you to your father. Truly it would be a kindness to conceal him from you. He is a miserable wreck of a life that anger and madness have alternately vexed, and even this wreck is now in the power of death. Think, then, what a dreadful sight awaits you. The weak state that you are in at present makes me fear greatly for you in the trial to which you are called. It is in your own choice whether or not you will meet it. The sight of a dying father is the most heart-rending that man can endure." All this was said by the first speaker, who paused after each sentence, as if to enjoy the grief it caused Rogiero.

"Cease, cruel man !" replied he. "If your words are uttered in order to enjoy my distress, your baseness is more than human ; if to console my afflicted spirit, you are the least successful comforter that ever lived. Cease, I pray you. Too well I know how afflictive is this dispensation. I was born to love, and however numerous might have been the objects presented to my heart, they could never have exhausted the infinite power of affection with which I was born ; and yet I know neither father nor mother, wife nor friend, on whom I might turn the longing of my soul. This fire, unable to find a vent, has consumed what it should have nourished. A single spark has remained, and this is to burn for a moment, like a meteor at night, and die. It will die ; but let it burn. I feel that in this night I must completely change. I feel

the approach of a hitherto unheard-of agony ; already my flesh trembles, my bones melt,—and this trouble comes from imagination only ! Let me try how far man can suffer and fate persecute ; let me try how the voice of a father affects a son, even though that father be dying.”

Agitated by the deepest excitement, he moved towards the men who stood opposite him ; and although he had ceased speaking, he appeared to threaten them, if they did not quickly lead him to the object of his wishes. The two rose immediately, and, having signed to him to wait a few moments, they went to the end of the room opposite to the door by which Rogiero had entered. As they went, one of them whispered to the other, “Henceforth, Count di Caserta, I wish to have your approval. What do you think of my work ?”

“The mercy of God is great ; but you appear to me even more wicked than He is merciful.”

“Indeed, my words sounded like religion and virtue.”

“It is true ; but there is no time when Satan is so terrible as when he appears as ‘an angel of light.’”

“Many thanks,” replied the Count della Cerra, smiling ; and, producing a key, he opened a little door guarded by strong iron bars ; then, putting his head out, he cried “Gisfredo ! Gisfredo !”

After a little while there appeared the head, then the shoulders and breast, of a man, as if he were ascending stairs. Count della Cerra, bending towards him, asked him some question, to which he replied with an affirmative nod ; then the count, turning to Rogiero, said, “You can come.”

Rogiero sprang forward, and, without hesitation, hastened down the narrow staircase. The two counts followed. Gisfredo went before, lighting the way with a lantern which he had brought. Rogiero, with all his efforts, could not tell who this Gisfredo was, because, like the others, he had his face covered with black cloth ; but he seized him once suddenly, pretending to stumble, and perceived, by his turning round very quickly and suspiciously, by the rolling of his eyes, which he saw

through an opening in the cloth, when he, as if accidentally, touched the hilt of his dagger, that he was a man of fraud, and not of open violence.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRISONER.

Oh ! perch'ò almeno
Lungi da lui non muoio ! Orrendo, è vero,
Gli giungeria l'annunzio ; ma varcata
L'ora solenne del dolor saria ;
E adesso innanzi ella ci sta ; bisogna
Gustarla a sorsi, e insieme.

MANZONI, *Conte di Carmagnola.*

... Oh ! why, at least,
Could I not die far off ! Fearful, indeed,
Would the announcement be ; but then were past
The solemn hour of grief. But now we must
Drink the full draught together.

M. G. M.



THEY reached the foot of the staircase. The corridor appeared slightly illuminated by a distant light. Passing on, they arrived at a vestibule separated from the prison by a grating. Rogiero perceived at a glance the scene which presented itself. He saw a man almost buried in a chair ; his features were not entirely visible, for the rays of the lamp fell elsewhere ; yet he seemed pale and old ; his hair was quite white, and he kept his eyes closed, as one who would prepare himself to die. A table stood before him, on which was a cup and a crucifix. Beside his chair, on the ground, lay a long rod all notched, and the notches, although generally regular, were gradually deeper and deeper. This was a labor of grief. When this unhappy man was first imprisoned, he formed the idea of numbering the days of his confinement, that he might know how long he was

destined to suffer, and that he might rejoice in the hope that this time was continually diminishing ; perhaps, also, looking forward to happier days, he thought that it might hereafter be a source of pleasure to compare his future condition with the present. This work now lay neglected on the ground. Hope, the last that leaves the pillow of the dying, and reveals herself to his eyes even when, veiled by the cloud of death, they are not able to recognize the dear countenances of kindred and friends,—hope itself had abandoned his heart. When years, accumulating over his head, had turned his blond hair to white, no longer did flesh and spirit tremble at the sound of the door turning on its hinges, nor did he suppose, with every touch upon the lock, that the hour had come when some compassionate hand would lead him to the light of heaven. Despairing, he threw away this calendar, which, teaching him to dwell upon his sufferings, rendered them longer and more insupportable ; he loved to consider his confinement a long, long day of trouble, whose night he was to find in death. And in truth, there was no light to make a distinction between day and night. From the first moment of his imprisonment, he had never seen the face of heaven, not even through the grated windows ; and since his life was darkness, he could look upon death as only annihilation. Having become entirely insensible, he awaited like an inanimate object the moment destined, by the order of things, for his extinction. Would that he had retained courage enough to put an end to such a pitiable existence ! This thought, which needs for its execution all the powers of the soul, arose in his mind when, discouraged by misfortune, he sought in vain among the passions of the past for a remnant of that spirit which might nerve him to give back his body to the elements, reducing form to its original matter. Not a sigh, not a complaint ever escaped his lips ; all which the depth of bitterness or the fury of passion could prompt, he had uttered a thousand times ; silence alone remained to him, and he was as voiceless as the grave. Years had entirely effaced his memory from the minds of men. There was no sigh, no word of

love for him ; if at times his name presented itself to the remembrance of some old retainer, who, sitting by the hearth, narrated the glories of the house of Swabia to the servants of the family, he would beware of allowing it to pass his lips, because it would recall one guilty of such a crime as might terrify Lucifer himself; or if ever he did name him, it was in a whisper, hastily, as one would speak of the damned. There remained for him living not even that slight affection that is preserved for the dead !

He extended his right hand with difficulty : it trembled as if palsied ; it had almost reached the table when it fell powerless ; he waited an instant, then moved it again. Feeling about, he grasped the crucifix, and lifted it to his mouth, about to drink. Startled by missing the refreshment of the liquid, he opened his eyes, and seeing the image of our Redeemer, replaced it petulantly upon the table, muttering between his teeth, "*O Dio !* I burn with thirst !" He then grasped the cup, and drank eagerly, spilling some of the water upon his chin and breast ; but he did not seem vexed at it. His thirst quenched, he gave a groan, and fell back immovable in his former torpor. He had nothing left of the man but the animal wants !

Rogiero saw this spectacle of degradation and misery, and placed both hands over his eyes, believing the mere covering of the eyelids insufficient to screen them from that sight. He leaned against a pillar, and when he would have ordered them to open the grating, he was unable to utter a word : he was obliged to express his wish by a motion of his hand.

The grating was opened. The old man felt his knees embraced, and stretching out his hand to discover what it was, his fingers fell upon a head of long hair. "It seems like the head of a man," said he, and sank back in his usual state of utter listlessness. . . . But this time his hand did not fall : it was grasped firmly ; he felt it warmed, —moistened,—was it with tears? He bent his ear, and thought that he heard what for years he had not heard,—the sobs of weeping.

The fire of his spirit was quenched, yet he had not be-

come wholly frozen ; a faint hue stole over his cheeks, and his eye became, for a moment, less dim than before.

"Are these tears?" cried he, in anguish. "Mine have long since been exhausted. I have shed them in rage, in love, in tenderness, in despair. Now, if Heaven should permit them again to flow, I would shed them ever for pity, because the most acceptable tears to the Comforter of the unfortunate are those of pity, and . . ."

"Do not withdraw your hand from my head ; . . . do not leave me upon the path of life without your blessing !" said Rogiero, his voice broken by sobs.

Henry did not reply. Rogiero looked up and saw him unmoved, as if he had not heard his words ; he softly pressed his hand, and repeated : "Your blessing ! your blessing !"

"Blessing ! Blessing !" repeated Henry, as if echoing his words, and then continued : "This is a word of love. Men in the world," and he pointed upwards, "used it weeping. The past runs incoherently through my memory ; an alternation of light and darkness occupies my mind, . . . but it seems to me . . . certainly I also was once blessed among men. I cannot remember it now. . . . Ah ! it was my father that blessed this head, which had formed the design of taking away his life !" And he smote his forehead, and prayed and lamented in a piteous manner.

Rogiero restrained him, and whispered in his ear, "And this blessing speaks in your favor : his pardon has prevailed for you with God, and every sin has been remitted to you."

"Walcherius ! Walcherius ! is this a sword which you place in my hand ? Is it with a sword that the son is to present himself before his father ? Do these words become an archdeacon of the Holy Mother Church ? These are words of the devil. . . . Go—go ; . . . in Heaven's name, do not tempt me !—The pope ? You lie ; the father of the faithful cannot advise parricide.—Oh ! how beautifully shines that royal crown ; . . . how brilliantly ! Do you love it ? Ah ! I do !—Well, it is kept for you at Monza, by your faithful Milanese ; . . . but

mind, between you and that crown there stands a life : . . . let it be extinguished. Mercy ! mercy ! I have repented from the bottom of my heart. What avails it ? Will a thought blot out a crime ? But his pardon ? What avails it ? Will the deed of a wicked man be cancelled by the generosity of a good one ? But I have suffered so much ! How long have I suffered ?” Here he searched about him, but not being able to find what he sought, added : “Time has consumed the instrument that enabled me to record it, and I still live ! Yet I have said that I would pardon every one, even Manfred—”

“Manfred !”

“Who has mentioned him ? In pity, breathe not his name ; . . . torture me rather, . . . but do not mention Manfred : . . . it is a name that stood long in my heart coupled with thoughts of blood. Now the day of vengeance is past, because that of death has arrived. Who would have supposed it ? His smile was the smile of innocence ; the purest joy sparkled in his eyes ; . . . his words were soft ; . . . he was called, by common consent, the noblest youth of Italy : the maidens sighed for him, the troubadours and knights envied him ; he was the most precious gem in Frederick’s diadem. His face seemed that of an angel ; his heart . . . ah ! his heart was incomparably base ;—the union of such a soul and such a body was either a sin or an error.—Fierocious thirst of dominion ! Manfred, hast thou worn the desired crown ? See and feel how it weighs upon the head, when, instead of gems, it bears the curse of a despairing soul, and the condemnation of God’s justice—”

“O ! my father—” interrupted Rogiero.

“There was a time,” continued the prisoner, placing his hand on his breast, “there was a time when, at that word, I felt an indescribable sensation here more delightful than all the joys of earth. Now I feel nothing more, nothing ; . . . I am dead. I have no passion except for water, which quenches the thirst that consumes me.”

And here he groped about in search of the cup. Rogiero sprang to his feet, took it, held it to his lips, and, supporting his head, helped him to drink. The old

man passively obeyed the impulse ; but when, opening his eyes, he for the first time noticed Rogiero, he uttered a faint cry and made a repellent gesture, and, half stupefied and half amazed, exclaimed, "Manfred !"

This exclamation was not pronounced in so low a tone but that it reached the ears of those who had remained at the grating ; one of them started suddenly as if stung, and uttered a deep groan.

The old man continued slowly : "Do you see, Manfred, to what this ambition of yours has reduced me ? Do you see the abyss of misery into which an immortal soul can fall ? And if you have a heart that can be touched, grieve. . . . Ah ! you cannot be Manfred. . . . No ; . . . he was of your age when I saw him last. Years and suffering have prematurely prostrated my powers, but even years alone do not pass without leaving their trace upon the creature destined to die. Are you his son ? What do you want ? There is no crime in you ; I have never nourished any hatred against you, but I cannot feel love. Rise, be comforted. I have long since pardoned your father, and even in the hour of my fury, I never cursed the children, or children's children, of those who oppressed me. Rise. . . . Bid him be happy, and be you happy also. If the voice of one, speaking from the borders of the grave may prevail with you, in compensation for my many sorrows, I beg you to fulfil this my last wish : . . . bury me beside Frederick, . . . my father ; . . . without pomp, if you wish, without the crown, although it could be no prejudice to you to grant it to a corpse : . . . it is sufficient for me to sleep beside him."

"Listen to me, for the love of Heaven ! These tears that moisten your hands are those of your son Rogiero."

The mind of Henry, as though overcome by the effort of speaking rationally, relapsed into delirium, and, imagining that he was conversing with his wife, daughter of Leopold the Glorious, Archduke of Austria, he continued thus : "Agnes, why does our son weep ? Comfort him, for he is the delight of my life ; . . . his smile is so sweet. How can you bear to let him weep ? Comfort him, Agnes, comfort him. How glad will Frederick be, when

you place this dear child in his arms ! . . . And why should he not be glad ? Is he not his grandchild ?—Whose porphyry sepulchre is that ? I see the escutcheon of Swabia, . . . Frederick I. . . . Glory to his soul ! glory to him who died fighting in the Holy Land ! . . . No, . . . no, . . . it is Frederick II. . . . Is he dead, then ? did he not remember me on his death-bed ? I have no longer a father, and my son ? . . . Agnes, where have you gone ? Agnes, . . . my son . . .”

“He is dying of grief at your feet !”

“He ? Who ?”

“Your son.”

Henry placed his hands on the head of Rogiero, and looked at him fixedly for a long time ; then he said,

“Truly your face seems that of a grandchild of Frederick, but if you are really my son, why did you come so late ? I have called you for years and years, as from a desert of time. I can leave you only an inheritance of misfortune. All paternal affection is dead in my heart ; . . . even the name of father sounds to me as a remembrance of something far off and forgotten, as the face of a companion in misfortune appears in the day of pride. If you came to see how sad is the end of a degraded being, depart, I command you. If pity brought you here, kill me ; . . . do not tremble ; . . . kill me ; . . . have pity upon me. . . . I am suffering such fearful torments in this hour, in which I stand trembling between death and life . . . such torments that it would be parricide not to take away the life of your father. Be sure and do not fear that God will call you to account for my soul. The first prayer that I shall offer before His throne will be for you, who freed me from so much pain, and I will beg Him not to punish you, for it was love that directed your hand ; and He will pardon as I have pardoned. But if Divine Wisdom demands retribution, I will pray that it may fall, not upon you, but upon him who forced his son to give the best proof of love for his father—by killing him.”

He leaned his head upon Rogiero's shoulder, sighing, but without tears ; then he continued impetuously,

"But if you are really flesh of my flesh, if you are he whose childish caresses used to calm the tempest of my fierce soul, save yourself; . . . your enemies are many and powerful. Do you not know that all their joy is in your death, all their fear in your life? Save yourself; . . . for they pursue you with the eagerness of the hound after the deer. Alas! I thought that I had no more sorrows to endure; but they are prolonged to infinity. Do not stop to embrace or to kiss me; the time thus lost might be fatal; far dearer to me would be the knowledge that you were safe. In Palestine you can die bravely for the Sepulchre of the Redeemer. Here, take this relic: it will serve sometimes to remind you of me in your prayers. Pray for a man who suffered all the bitterness that can be borne on this earth; pray for a sinful and unhappy father, but go, . . . go; . . . as you value your life, go. Who knows but that your coming here was treachery? Who knows but that they would wish to sacrifice us together? Did you hear the bolts move? It is too late . . . too late . . . they have fastened the door, and forever! Oh! the ruffians! the villains!"

He rose to his feet: the strength which should have sustained his life for a few more hours seemed concentrated in one moment; his cheeks flushed with a feverish hue; he seized Rogiero's arm, and pushed him violently towards the door;—he advanced hastily one step; a second; at the third Rogiero felt his arm released; the miserable Henry fell senseless to the ground. The young man hastened to assist him; the three mysterious persons sprang forward with the same object. They raised him. His mouth was covered with blood,—his brow livid, his eyes fixed. They felt his pulse: the power of the imagination over that sinking frame, with the shock of the fall, had snatched him from the living.

Strong emotion took possession of Rogiero's soul; he raved about the room, calling piteously upon his father, and conjuring him to answer, and not to abandon him to the power of his enemies. Often he broke forth into threats, and he added to his ravings such violent gesticulations, that the bystanders could with difficulty restrain

him. Finally his exasperation reached its utmost: an irresistible desire for death seized him; he endeavored to extricate himself from those who held him, and to dash himself against the wall. He did not fully succeed in his design; he reached the wall, indeed, but was not able to escape from the hands of the men, who strove with all their might to control him. The blow on his head, although not sufficient to kill him, was enough, however, to make him fall senseless in their arms.

The time during which Rogiero was to mount guard in the gardens of King Manfred had expired. The captain of the guard, followed by four soldiers, went toward the larger gate of the garden, to relieve Rogiero from duty and place another in his stead. They saw him not. They called: no one answered. Had he deserted his king? "Impossible! impossible!" said the captain, and just then he stumbled against the spear which Rogiero, in departing, had thrown on the ground.

Although the blow pained his foot keenly, the captain raised it without uttering a word, fearing lest the soldiers, looking that way, should see, in the abandoned halberd, too strong a proof against what he had affirmed. But it was of no avail; for, at the moving of the lantern, the polished point shone brilliantly, and they all exclaimed at once, "The halberd! the halberd!"

"Yes," replied the captain, shaking his head, "it is undoubtedly the halberd; it is not a story to which one can say, 'I don't believe it;' it is the halberd. Most holy saints! we live in such times, that to put faith in others is as foolish as to deceive is wicked."

Thus saying, partly out of temper, partly confused, he doubled the guards, went to the stables, and there also he missed Rogiero's horse; hence he ordered some soldiers to mount in haste, and not to return till they had heard some news of him.

Rogiero recovered his senses. His forehead burned with a sharp pain; his eyes encountered a light that stood on a table: he shut them suddenly, as if they had

been wounded, and begged to have it removed ; then with an effort he looked round, and noticed that he was lying upon a magnificent bed, and that the mysterious person who had spoken so little was tending him with the affectionate care of a mother ; and when he was fully himself, he heard him utter these words : " Thank God that he has at last recovered his senses ! "

Rogiero, remembering what had taken place, sprang from the bed, and, making a violent effort to speak, said, " What more ? "

" What more ? " replied Count della Cerra. " Tears belong to women. . . . To-morrow we will have your father's body embalmed, and as soon as possible carried to Monreale, that it may rest beside that of Frederick. As to yourself, if you wish to sacrifice your kingdom and your revenge to the *man* who murdered your father—"

" One of us before long must die by the sword ! " cried Rogiero, excited.

" Perhaps both," said the speaker to himself, and then added aloud, " Mark well, Rogiero : new governments are destroyed more easily than old ones, since to the latter, even if there is no more love felt for them, habit gives a passive strength which it is difficult to overcome ; in the new, either from their having had no time to take root, or from their always falling below the expectations of those who desired them, this difficulty is not so great. Charles, Count of Provence, is preparing to wage war against this kingdom. We must invite him to come ; we must aid him to weaken himself by weakening Manfred ; we must enable him to conquer Manfred, and then fall upon the count, weakened by his own victory."

" Well ? " said Rogiero.

" Well ; let us send a faithful messenger to announce to Charles what I have just explained. Here are credentials signed by the greatest barons of the kingdom. I think that by this time Charles must have entered Monferrato ; a messenger from us, by hastening, might meet him in Lombardy. If he should meet with any Ghibelline troops, here are letters for Buoso da Doara, which will let him pass. But this is a very delicate affair ; the lives

of thousands of your faithful servants depend upon the messenger's loyalty."

"Heaven forbid that when others are encountering dangers for me I should spare myself. Give me the papers; . . . I will carry them myself. . . ."

"To Charles d'Anjou? You, so ill?"

"No matter; give them to me. Is there any information in these letters regarding my position?"

"We thought it best to conceal it. You would be too precious a hostage in the hands of the count."

"Very well. Tell me who you are."

"I?"

"Yes. You ought to repay confidence with confidence."

"Prince, what matters it to you who I am?"

"Listen: circumstances compel me to an act which has always been my abhorrence. Perhaps I might resist them, yet I will not; I trust to you, I abandon myself wholly to you; and this not because you might not be traitors, but because if your treachery should doom me to death, it would be welcome. All this will show you that whatever fate your designs may bring upon me, I shall never say anything against you, for you cannot injure me. Now I ask of you a single proof of confidence, and you ask what matters it to me to know you? Certainly nothing; but what matters it to you to hide yourself from me?"

"If it depended on me, I would already have revealed my name; but we are many, bound by a common oath not to disclose ourselves to any one. You will perceive that without the consent of all I could not; . . . their safety. . . ."

"But could I not break the seal of these letters, and read. . . ."

"You would not do it, and then. . . ."

"I should not find your name; I understand. Be it as you will. Give orders for my departure. I require the refreshment of the open air."

"Where shall we see you again?"

"At St. Germano."

“At St. Germano.”

This said, the Count della Cerra, making a sign, summoned the soldier Roberto, who led Rogiero out with the same precautions he had used in introducing him there.

As he went out of the room, Count della Cerra shook the arm of Count di Caserta, who was absorbed in deep thought, and said, “What are you thinking about?”

“I am thinking how I should have loved him if he had been granted to me for a son.”

“He is, without doubt, a handsome stripling; he recalls the best days of Manfred’s youth.”

“Too much, too much does he resemble Manfred!” cried Caserta; and, rising hastily, he threw his chair from him, and rushed from the room.

“Ah!” cried Count della Cerra, in the fulness of his fierce smile, “I stung him to the quick.” He paused, watching the door through which Caserta had disappeared, then continued: “Fool! Minds like this,” and he touched his forehead, “are not born to suffer. So long as your designs, however foolish, aid mine, I will help you; otherwise, with a little mock humility and an entreaty for pardon, I will place you under the protection of the gallows, and myself under that of a throne.” And throwing off the veil which covered his face, he left the room by a door opposite that through which Count di Caserta had gone.

Rogiero, meanwhile, in company with Roberto, proceeded with the bandage over his eyes. It seemed to him now that they were pursuing a different path, nor was he deceived: reaching the head of a street, Roberto took off the bandage, and he saw, with joy, his horse fastened to the knocker of a half-broken door. This was his only solace during that memorable night. He went up to him, and, lovingly patting him, said, “Allah, Allah, you, then, have not abandoned your master! I am about to become a wanderer upon the face of the earth; do you wish to be my companion and my friend? Mark, though, I am unhappy!” The noble animal, as if wishing to acknowledge the trust that his master placed in him, pawed the

ground, and, raising his head proudly, showed his affection by a sonorous neighing. Rogiero continued : " This matters not to you, Allah ! In good or in bad fortune, I am still your beloved master. Oh ! men . . . men have the faculty of calculating where the storm is going to burst, and how to avoid it, when fortune is about to change and betray you ; and this faculty of theirs is called reason ! "

Having said these words, he placed one hand upon the saddle, and, without touching the stirrup, leaped lightly into it ; then turning to Roberto, who had remained motionless looking at him, he gave him his hand, saying, " Roberto, I greatly fear that we may never see each other again, save in the valley of Jchoshaphat ; but if we should meet again, remember,—and I too will remember,—that at the moment of my departure I clasped your hand as a friend."

Roberto, in deep grief, raised his hand to grasp that of Rogiero ; and when he felt its touch, a sudden tremor seized his frame, he bent his head sorrowfully over the hand that Rogiero had offered him, impressed a kiss, and let a tear fall on it.

" What is this, Roberto ? You have moistened my hand."

" May GOD," replied Roberto, raising his eyes to heaven, and immediately lowering them, " may GOD, who ought to watch over innocence, accompany you on your way ! " Thus saying, he turned away, but from time to time he would look back, stop, then continue his way ; his eyes were full of tears ; he breathed heavily. Truly, at that moment, a most fierce battle was raging in his soul. Whether the good or the bad passion, however, conquered, we will not say at present ; all that we can say is, that the victory was manifested by a horrible imprecation, joined to a gesture of rage, and a precipitate flight towards the castle.

The thought of the events which had taken place did not permit Rogiero to take much notice of what was passing before his eyes ; he also departed sighing, and soon found himself in the open country, for since the

siege of Corrado the Swabian, Naples had remained without walls ; he let his reins fall upon the horse's neck, and bending his head in meditation, did not heed where he was carried.

The horse, left to himself, followed the instinct which we usually observe in those animals, of returning to their homes, and would certainly have carried Rogiero there, if by chance he had not started aside, shying from a stone that came in his way. Rogiero looked up, and saw with astonishment that he was near the Capuan castle ; his first impulse was to retreat as rapidly as possible, but he stopped. The moon had not yet disappeared, her last rays were shining faintly upon the many-tinted windows of the castle ; he glanced at them all, but his eye rested upon one. He rose in his stirrups, stretched his arms towards it, and exclaimed with ineffable bitterness : "Farewell !" He sank back in his saddle, put spurs to his good horse, which sprang forward with incredible swiftness, and was soon lost in the darkness ; for a time his distant trampling was heard, it became very faint, confused, then ceased entirely.

Who could describe the emotions of that fiery spirit expressed in that single word, "Farewell" ? It was uttered to that fair, sorrowful maiden, who gave him the first token of love, placing her delicate form between his heart and his dagger. The music of her voice, the beauty of her person, her divine look, the ambrosia of her kiss, the quivering of his whole frame to that mysterious touch, passed through his mind, like images of fire. Hope shone upon his soul through the medium of imagination, not of reason. In thought he sees a great assemblage of knights in gala dress, he hears an incessant sound of bells and instruments ; before his burning fancy rises the chapel of the *Santa Vergine Incoronata*, the priests, and the nuptial rites ; Yole wears the bridal wreath, Manfred accompanies her ; they approach the altar, the ceremonies begin, are almost finished ; a Crucifix, illuminated by thousand of tapers, stands in the middle of the holy place, Rogiero raises his eyes to its face. Eternal God ! - The brow is livid, the mouth bloody, the eyes starting from

their sockets ; it is the face of his betrayed father. Hope abandons him, despair seizes upon him, and transports him into "the blackness of darkness." He looks intently, and sees a form approaching ; its brow is pale, its mouth is bloody : he feels the touch of a hand, then that of a poniard ; hand and weapon are equally cold. An irresistible power forces him forward, raises his hand, armed with that poniard, and strikes it down. He hears a stifled groan ; the room is suddenly illuminated ; from the breast of Manfred pours a stream of blood ; across his body lies stretched a beloved being, her side also is bleeding, and her face deathlike. Rogiero could no longer bear the thronging fancies of his brain, and fell back on his saddle ; then, as if to fly from himself, he spurred his horse furiously forward. The noble animal rushes like the wind, his body is covered with foam, but he will die of fatigue rather than not obey his master's will. Rogiero ! Rogiero ! What avails your flight ? Whether you hasten on, or stop, despair rules supreme in your heart !

CHAPTER VII.

THE BANDITTI.

Almen dovria,
Se iniquo è nel suo cuor, serbar l'esterna
Religion degli avi nostri.

GIOVANNI DI GISCALA, *Tragedia*.

At least he might,
Though faithless were his heart, preserve the rite
Our pious fathers held. M. G. M.



LONG was the road, the night dark. The horse ran precipitously ; for although accustomed to understand his master's will, and follow it, yet Rogiero unconsciously kept spurring him. He galloped over one plain, then over another, and another

still; he leaped over hedges and ditches, crossed rivers, diving into them up to the breast; he was dripping with blood and perspiration, and yet his master relented not. This furious race would have carried them both to certain destruction, if an incident had not luckily prevented it. A man mounted upon a nag, travelling the same road, happened to see the danger in which they were, and, running at full speed after Rogiero, cried:

"Stop, stop, Sir Knight; . . . the river is very deep below there; . . . stop; . . . you will surely drown."

Rogiero heard not these warnings, and spurring more and more, was fast approaching death. That man, although riding what seemed a poor nag, still urging him by his voice and whip, succeeded in overtaking him, and cried out again: "Sir Knight! you seem bent on destruction; . . . the torrent runs fearfully fast at the end of this plain. . . . Don't you hear the roaring of the waters? . . . Don't throw your life away. . . . Do you hear me? . . . I say . . . Sir Knight!" At this point seizing Rogiero's horse by the bridle, he stopped him. This latter, startled so suddenly, came to himself, and looking around, placed one hand upon his forehead, saying:

"Where am I?—Who are you?"

"I am a poor pilgrim, begging from door to door; going your same way, I happened to notice in the twilight the danger you were running into, and hastened to warn you that the torrent is very dangerous just below here. You seem very agitated, Sir Knight; still, if you have pity, help a poor pilgrim, and I will pray St. Philip and St. Januarius for the peace of your mind and the rest of your soul."

"Get you hence, and thank God that I don't take your life in recompense for having saved mine."

"Sir Knight, don't repulse me so: God's law teaches to love one's enemies. How can you hate one who has rendered you a service?"

"Did I ask you for it? If you saved me from death, it is a sign that it was more for your interest that I should live:—your brain might not have conceived this thought, but your heart did. Thus in the dark I cannot perceive

your face, but you certainly must be a scoundrel ; . . . are you not a man ? ”

“ You add insult to my poverty. Oh ! not so did the knights of old ! ”

“ Man ! . . . I despise you not because you are poor, but because you are a man ; and I want you to know that my contempt for the whole race begins with myself. ”

“ Oh ! for the love you bear to your mother, . . . to your kindred, . . . ”

“ I know them not, I have no obligation to any. I can hate without remorse, and I live hating. Get you hence, and may you die a worse death than that you saved me from ! ”

“ O Blessed Mary ! Sir Knight, you are beside yourself ! But since you refuse me the smallest alms, grant me at least your company until we have crossed the *Campania* ; you know that it is full of robbers and assassins on account of the war between the Holy See and King Manfred. Do not deny me this. . . . May the eyes of your lady ever look kindly upon you ! ”

“ I wish for no company : if you are weak, why do you place yourself in danger ? Go ; . . . man is no fit companion for man ; . . . rather the serpent of the desert. . . . ” Thus saying, he spurred his horse and disappeared in the darkness of the night.

Morning came. The sun rose in the majesty of its rays, and spread heat and light over all things. The waters of the river seemed to rejoice in seeing the sun, and the sun the waters of the river : the latter trembled, agitated by the morning breeze ; the former diffused over them its rays ; and hence arose a brilliant, silvery, incessant, quick sparkling, which dazzled the eyes, and yet it was beautiful to look at. It seemed the joy of two friends, who meet again after many years of past dangers and separation. The country rung harmoniously with various tints, with songs and perfumes,—the exultation of nature. If there is an hour in the day in which the earth shows itself to us as it must have appeared in the first days of creation, before our fathers sinned, it is surely that in which the sun returns to illumine it. God in His wisdom granted it to

the resigned man, who rises with the dawn to fulfil the punishment of labor which fell upon the descendants of Adam ; or rather in recompense for his state, because the laborer is poor, and his rising with the sun is for the benefit of him who never sees it, except when it begins to decline. Noon came,—the beautiful noon in the serene days of summer. Is there anything here below that can compare with the azure of the sky ? The eyes of beauty, has said a sweet poet, *point the way that leads to heaven*,* but they cannot resemble it. The grandeur of the heavens stands alone, as the omnipotence of its Creator. The star of life, all radiant with youth, rejoices to illumine that divine vault, and that vault offers a boundless field to the splendor of its rays ; both beautiful, they love to participate in each other's beauty. O child of earth ! in this happy hour do not lower your eyes to your mother : men have despoiled the fields of the fruits of labor to sustain a life of misery ;—do not lower your eyes to earth, or the illusion will vanish ; keep them fixed upon the heavens ; God hath created you for them.

Hail, all hail, O sun, that suscitates and circumscribes life ; hail, O fountain of life and death ! Thou hast seen with those same rays the birthplace and the tomb of our first parents ; thou shalt see that of our last posterity : nations have disappeared before thee, like the waters of the torrent, like the sands of the desert. Men have cursed thee, and thou hast not ceased to scatter over them the blessings of thy light ; they have offered thee incense and prayers as to a God, and thou hast not increased thy heat ;—ever great, ever immutable in thy goodness. At times, a little cloud, emanation of terrestrial vapor, shadowed those vaults destined to thee alone, and thou irradiatedst it with such splendor, that it seemed the brow of innocence ; but it blackened as ingratitude, and waged war against thy rays.

* “Gentil mia donna, i' veggio
Nel muover dei vostri occhi un dolce lume,
Che mi mostra la via che al ciel conduce.”

PETRARCA, *Canzone*, 9.

Dear lady mine, from thy sweet eyes is given
A light to guide my upward path to heaven.

The serene of the sky was lost, but only for us ; the storm raged, but over our heads : the thunderbolts were under thee ; and thy light, ever brilliant, ever peaceful, smiled at its dark life of one hour.

Will thy rays be then eternal ? Whence didst thou draw thy fire ? How dost thou preserve it ? Shalt thou survive the last of the living ? Art thou by thyself, or a stronger power constrains thee to be ? No : let us bless it ; it is light and warm.

Twilight came, which, though speckled with a greater number of colors than that of the morning, falls melancholy, sad. A ray of gold and purple reddens those boundaries where it seems that heaven, bending low, joins the ocean ; but that ray is as a thing of the past, and has the stamp of its decay : it seems like the fame of a conqueror, who, although gone from the world, has entrusted his memory to history, in order that it may be revived in future ages. This agony between light and darkness is as solemn as that between life and death ; it touches all the soft chords in our hearts : the laborer stops his work, the philosopher his meditation, to allow their souls free vent to their melancholic sensations. This hour is a test for tender hearts : if a man met his enemy and asked for pardon, this latter, though capable of reverting in the night to thoughts of vengeance, and even to execute them, could not refuse it at that moment. Unhappy he who views the parting day without sadness !—thousand times more so than he who views the coming morn without feeling joy !

All this wonderful panorama of Nature had passed before the eyes of Rogiero, who, though he had not paid attention to it, yet had felt its influence : his thoughts in the morning had been full of wrath ; they were now full of sadness. For a long time his horse could hardly walk, when Rogiero, unaware, found himself within a thick forest ; not a hut visible, no sound heard, except the mysterious rustling of the leaves agitated by a light breeze. He dismounted ; his body felt weary ; he took off the bit from the horse, who neighed joyfully, as if, having performed cheerfully the arduous duty for his master, he

deserved now a due recognition from him. Rogiero patted him affectionately ; but when, placing a hand on his side, he felt it moist with clotted blood, and the horse shivered somewhat on account of the pain of the exasperated wound, he exclaimed plaintively : "Allah ! my good horse ! See what thanks you get from a man whom misfortune has demented. Alas ! To treat the best of friends as one would his bitterest enemy, is a sure sign of a diseased brain ;" and he raised his eyes to heaven, sighing bitterly. Afterwards, all armed as he was, he stretched himself upon the ground, using his shield as a pillow. He was extremely weary ; yet in the beginning his mind was fixed on a single thought ; but soon after an infinite number of fancies passed through his head—very distinct in the beginning, but afterwards broken, disordered, finally confused ; his heavy eyes gradually closed, and he fell asleep.

He had remained for some time in that state, when he was suddenly awakened by a loud roar of laughter, curses and vulgar expressions, such as are wont among low people. At a short distance from him, among the underbrush, he saw a fire, and before it men of fierce aspect, armed to the teeth, who revelled in a horrid manner ; he heard also, when their infernal uproar subsided, a tearful voice wailing ; and to this answering hoarse laughter, and words of mockery. Rogiero, drawing his sword, softly approached the place, and easily perceived that it was a party of banditti, but he could not as readily notice what was the cause of their merriment. Approaching still nearer, he finally saw a man, whose voice, although altered by fear, seemed to him the same as that of the man who in the early morning had asked him for his company. His garments seemed really those of a beggar, for he wore a pilgrim's gray gown ornamented with shells, as was the custom of those who went to the Holy Land ; he might have been fifty years old, small in person, but looked as if he might be very strong and active ; he had a pale face all covered with wrinkles, sunken eyes, but with very black pupils.

"Hark ye,—for I want to convince you that we are

not using you ill, but rather that it is for your good that you should die. We have searched you from head to foot, and have found neither an image of Saint, nor a rosary of the Madonna, but instead this purse full of gold so bright and new, that it is a real comfort to look at : this of course it is better that we should keep ; at the same time you yourself must be convinced that this cannot be the property of a poor pilgrim ; and even if it was, how could you, begging through the world, collect them all new, and of the same year ? *Ergo*, you are not a pilgrim. It remains now to ascertain whether you are a robber or a spy ; but it is useless to go at great length into this inquiry, for in either case you must die. If you are a robber, as it is probable, rivalry of trade, fear of seeing our profession in too many hands, now that business is getting rather scarce, counsel us to kill you : if you are a spy, the pleasure of revenge, the assurance of the impossibility of your injuring us in the future, advise us to kill you. Charity, my brother, is indeed a great virtue ; but I have heard often that, to be perfect, it must begin at home. Now charity to you would operate entirely contrary to mine ; you are weak, and I am strong ; you ran, and I overtook you. *Ergo*, I kill you. What say you to my logic ? ”

This argument was held by a bandit who seemed to have some preëminence over the others : he was handsome, young and strongly built. His face though, from the middle upward, was truly frightful on account of its black eyebrows continually scowling, its wrinkled forehead and threatening eyes ; from the middle downward, however, its red mouth always smiling, and showing a very handsome set of white teeth, denoted him fond of wit and merriment ; his face was indeed a contradiction, and more so his soul : a nature unique in the world, which I am sorry not to be able to unfold fully in this story, because he who possessed it succumbed to a premature destiny. At the end of his words the bystanders roared out, “ Drengotto is right, indeed he is right ! ”

The unfortunate pilgrim, espying the moment when he would be heard, threw himself at the feet of the bandit,

exclaiming: "Beautiful knight, don't stain your hand with innocent blood! you would commit a grave sin. I swear to you by the Cross of our Saviour that I am neither a robber nor a spy. This gold was given me by a baron of Chieti, who lodged me one night in his castle, and ordered me to carry it to the Abbot of Monte Cassino, to use it for the service of the Church and for the poor. I heard in the neighborhood that he, in his youth, had been a very wicked man; and now, in his old age, feeling that death was approaching, his heart had been touched, and had been taken suddenly with the fear of the devil; . . . and you, Sir Knight, do you not fear the devil? . . ."

"Why should I fear old acquaintances?"

"Ah! do not injure the poor, for they are the protected of the Lord. Let me go my way; I will pray all I can for you. Have you not a Christian soul? Why do you wish mine lost?"

"*Nego minorem, nego minorem,*" resumed the bandit. "First of all, in order that your argument may stand, you would have to prove that you had one. But we will waive that question. We will admit that you have a soul; if so, it must be either a good or a bad one; if good, what is there in life to attract you? Life is a succession of afflictions; the world a prison of wild beasts; both weariness of spirit. Rejoice then that you are approaching the principal of all perfections; rejoice that you are going so speedily to delight in the inheritance of happiness that the Lord has promised you. If bad, the wicked soul owes a debt for his sins, and I collect it."

"And who has given you this right over my life?"

"Might, my dear brother, might. Do you think that when they shall have taken me, and according to the customs and laws of the country, burnt, hung, or buried me alive, in the name of the laws, by the will of a king *Dei gratia*, by a sentence made out *In nomine Domini, amen*, according to all the proper rules and formalities, full of quotations from *Irnerius*, *Bulgarius* and such old *Baccallan ii*, who have as much to do with it as Pilate in the *Credo*, will they have in reality any more right than

this?—Might, my boy, might is the great Mother Eve of all rights.”

Here all the banditti, who had been very attentive till then to the dispute, cried out :

“Bravo ! our doctor of law. Well said, Drengotto !”

“Oh ! Sir Knight, you are too good a master of argument for a poor beggar like me to dispute ; I conjure you upon the soul of your father, if he be dead.”

“That is what I myself know not. Poor man ! Indeed, I remember, he loved me very, very much. Everybody told him that I was the perfect image of my mother. He had me taught in grammar and rhetoric by a famous master at home, and when I was old enough, he gave me books, money, and a palfrey, and sent me to Bologna to study law at that famous university. In a year or two, instead of law, I learned all the vices that were, are, and can be, and even a little more. I contracted all sorts of debts, sold all my books, my palfrey, my clothes, and returned home in my shirt sleeves. I made up a good story about robbers, and my father believed it. But I would not stay long at home ; my father allowed me too small a pittance for my wants. So, espying where he kept his strong-box, I one night decamped with it ; and that is the last I ever heard of him.”

So saying, he smiled, but with such grim smiles, that his companions could not follow him, nor applaud.

“Now then, pilgrim,” he resumed, “since I cannot convince you that your death is a blessing, let us see whether I can reconcile you to it by the manner I intend to give it to you. Know, then, that as I have been at a university, I propose to give a classical Latin death. His glorious Highness, the Emperor Frederick II.,—peace be to his soul,—among his other achievements, invented the penalty of *propaginare*, from the Latin *propago*, *propaginis*, which means *to sprout, to shoot out*. This, as you will see, is a very curious sort of death ; for it is done by digging a hole in the ground as deep as you are tall, and a little over ; then thrusting you into it, head foremost, and covering it over again with earth. What say ye to that ? Is it not really an imperial idea ?”

"Yes, yes; let us *propagate* him! let us *propagate* him!" yelled in chorus those fierce men, and all set themselves to work digging the hole.

"Oh, holy Virgin, aid me!" exclaimed the pilgrim, trembling all over.

"For shame! for shame!" continued Drengotto. "Die like a man; rather rejoice at the thought of a sure revenge. You, thus *propagated*, will sprout; from the seed of a spy must surely spring the tree of the gallows. Comfort yourself then in the last hour with the hope that one day or another we shall be the fruits of your tree."

"Do not kill me, most valiant knight, do not kill me, for your holy baptism, for the blessing of God and the saints; keep me for your slave; I know how to take care of a horse; I will love you and yours; I will serve you faithfully. Oh! release me, release me; death is such agonizing torture." And he wept and sighed desperately.

"How do you know that death is painful? You have never died before; another time I may believe you, but for this once I cannot."

"Oh! yes, it is painful. Do you not see how I tremble only at hearing it mentioned? Even you would tremble if you were near it. Why have we such an instinct of life, if death is not a suffering?" And he still wept, and implored with piteous supplications.

"Come, come!—weep not, brother; you really move me to compassion. But consider, even Frederick the glorious Emperor, who was a much greater man than you, died; even Innocent, the wise pontiff, is defunct; and I, even I, born of Sir Tafo of Andreuccio, a rich broker of Naples, and Lady Ermellina his wife—I even, who have studied civil and common law in the University of Bologna, young, handsome, strong, must likewise die.* We are all born with this proviso; it is a condition *sine qua non*; eternity only grants us a few years of life: do not weep then over your misfortune; or weep rather,

* This speech is very similar to that of Achilles to Lycaon in the twenty-first book of Homer's Iliad. For my part, I don't believe that there is any one who considers it epic rather than comic.

and I with you, for our unhappy race.—Is that hole ready?"

It is not to be told how the pilgrim, who, by the compassionate sound with which the bandit had spoken, had somewhat reassured himself, sunk crestfallen at the concluding sentence, and much more so when he heard repeated from all around: "'Tis ready, 'tis ready!"

They fell upon him, though he strove to defend himself, kicking and biting whomever approached him. Many times was he seized, and as often he slipped from their hands; the muscles of his face were swollen convulsively; he yelled like a maniac, darting his eyes here and there; he used all the efforts of despair: but finally they succeeded in holding him fast, and, turning him upside down, they approached the hole. His howls became fiercer, if not louder.

"Oh, great mother of God, aid me!" he cried with wonderful celerity. "St. Januarius! St. Erasmus! St. Philip! Angels! Archangels! have mercy on my soul! Holy martyrs . . . and confessors . . ."

"So much the better," interrupted Drengotto. "If he dies unconvinced, he will at least die converted. Hear how well he recites the litanies of the saints?"

"Well said, well said!" exclaimed those wretches with a tumult of laughter. They had already reached the hole, in spite of the incredible efforts of the ill-starred man, and already inserted his head into it, when suddenly there were heard three sounds of a horn. The banditti, startled, dropped hold of the man, and, careless what became of him, took their arms, and under the orders of Drengotto, they stood still, as if about to receive a great personage.

They gazed right and left, uncertain whence he would appear; for the forest was very thick, and the rustling of the leaves prevented their hearing his footsteps. Suddenly Rogiero perceived a man of gigantic stature issue forth from the darkness, and reveal by the light of the fire all the majesty of his form. He was dressed like the others of the banditti, except that he had a coat-of-mail carefully burnished, a horn at his side, and a plume in his cap. The flame of the fire reflected on his coun-

tenance a vermilion light ; he had strong features, shaggy eyebrows, bloodshot eyes, all the marks of a man domineered by fierce passion ; at the same time his proud head, large forehead, his chin somewhat turned upward, his lips compressed, marked him as a man of strong will, and born to rule. That countenance of his, though severe, had nothing hideous in it ; rather it inspired confidence, as it is always observed in the aspect of those who are strong both in mind and in body. He was followed by four banditti, who led a number of mules loaded with provisions. When they had advanced, the leader looked around to all his companions, and with lordly manner courteously said to them : " Hail ! "

" Hail, all hail to you, captain ! " replied the banditti.

" Behold ! God does not wish the destruction of those who offend Him. We have acquired the means of providing for a long time for our need,—the need that places arms in our hands against our fellow-men."

" Acquired ! " exclaimed one of the four who followed him. " Acquired ! We could have easily done so, only you would buy and pay for it with so many bright gold coins of Frederick II."

" And is it not an acquisition, Beltramo ? Nowadays the world is conquered more with gold than arms ; and I fear it will be for a long time yet."

" I have nothing to say to that," replied Beltramo ; " but certainly that gold might have been spared."

" Did you spend it of your own ? Did I ask you for your share ? Oh ! Let us not weigh our hands upon the poor and oppressed ; let us teach those men, who have expelled us from their midst, that we are better than they. Indeed, I could have taken away from those poor vassals the goods that they were carrying to market : but would you, Beltramo, feed on these provisions without thinking of the tears that the hard exactor of the baron would cause when he went around collecting the rents, and they were unable to pay on our account ? No, no ; bread stolen from the poor does not comfort either body or soul. This evening, returning joyfully to their families, they will relate : Five banditti met us in our way ;

we fled, leaving our goods to save our lives ; they could have taken them, but they called us back, and paid for them more than we could have got at the market. And when they pray, I feel certain that they will remember us, and God, listening to the prayers of His chosen, will look down upon us with mercy, will see our misery, and will remove us from this life of torment to ourselves, and of fear to others. God is merciful in His works."

"Amen," said Drengotto, in an undertone.

"Why do you say *amen*, Drengotto?" asked a bandit who stood near him.

"Because the sermon is over ; indeed it will certainly end with a *cord* either to the *loins* or to the *throat*." *

"Drengotto !" called the leader.

Drengotto moved boldly to the front, replying : "*Adsum*, captain."

"Give me an account of the day."

"Very little to report, Sir Ghino. We have been tramping backward and forward from the wood to the river all day long, but have met neither a Christian nor a Saracen. Returning towards evening with empty hands, our dogs, snuffing and barking, rushed into a thicket, and we after them ; here we perceived that they had got hold of a beast of a pilgrim, who lies there on the ground ; we hastened to liberate him, for, had we delayed, they would have devoured him."

"That is well."

"Some of us proposed to let him go ; but I, having full delegated powers from you, objected, saying : Let us see first whether this good pilgrim carries about him relics or beads ; upon these holy things, sinners as we are, we will not put our hands ; but if he possess any silver, gold, or precious stones, we will take them, for these are vanities unworthy of religious men. After this we began to search him, and, *mirabile visu*, wonderful sight ! he carried neither rosaries nor relics of saints, but instead this purse full of golden *agostaries*."

"O most valiant baron, for the honor of your name,

* To turn monk or be hung.--Tr.

for the souls of your dead, save me from that cruel man, who in words and deeds seems Lucifer himself. Behold he has prepared a ditch to bury me alive." Thus interrupted the pilgrim, who, having heard the mild speech of the chief, had risen on his knees, and thus dragged himself to his feet. The banditti, seeing him appear in that attitude, with the fear of death in his face, covered with mud and dirt, broke out in loud laughter, which was soon repressed by a look from the stern chief.

"Rise," said Ghino. "Man never should kneel to man," and unbinding his hands, he added, "Go; you are free." Then, without waiting for his thanks, he turned to Drengotto, saying: "Is it true what I have heard?"

"Yes, very true."

"Why did you wish to do this?"

"Oh! for a mere joke; we only desired thus to have an example of the manner in which the Emperor Frederick executed our colleagues whenever they fell into his hands."

"You have transgressed one of the laws of our company; you deserve a punishment."

"Who has made these laws, captain?"

"Our free will."

"Who has made a thing can unmake it. Everything changes in this world—religious customs, heaven and earth; and a banditti's code, made after supper, with a goblet in the hand, shall not change?"

"Who is he that wishes to change these laws here?" cried Ghino, in a voice that made his companions shudder, and turning his eyes around in such manner that caused those they met to be cast down. "Who is he that wishes to change them here? Our little society made these laws by free consent, and I will have them obeyed."

"Don't talk *to me* of laws," exclaimed Drengotto, mockingly; "no one is more convinced of their absurdity than I who studied them at Bologna. Our laws are *primo mihi* . . . I . . ."

"Wretch! What avails you the blood of a weak man?"

What pleasure or what utility can you derive by barbarously killing a man who implores your pity? Remember that one day you also shall be judged."

"Well, every man has his opinions, and mine is this. There lived a people once, who used to murder, out of pity, all the deformed of body, and they have been praised; then why should I be blamed for killing the deformed of spirit, which is worse? Antiquity, Sir Ghino, is esteemed the *alma mater* of useful knowledge."

"Who are you that pretend to scrutinize the thoughts of man? What proofs had you that he was a spy? If these are your sentiments you deserve more than ever to be punished. And you should remember that the *weak* were never killed but by the *coward*."

"By this it seems that you accuse me of being a *coward*; I will call you *honest*, and we shall have both lied, or said a stupid thing each."

"Drengotto!"

"Oh, come now! Let us throw aside this mask of virtue, which does not become us, whose trade is to rob in the highways; it makes us look like the devil in a monk's cowl. Let us look on ourselves in all our nakedness. It is repulsive, but we have the courage to bear it. Let us call ourselves openly assassins; what is the use of hiding it? nobody would believe us. Mark this, be it an honor, or a stain, every one of us carries the stamp of Cain upon his forehead; you may pull down the cap over your eyes as much as you please; the mark will pierce through the cloth and show itself. Let us at least be sincere, for we cannot deceive ourselves by feigning; let us renounce the pretence of a virtue from which we derive no other benefit than the devil's mockery. To be thus fully rascals, without laws, is more to our purpose than to pretend to be honest with them. In the first case we are always on our guard, because we keep constant watch over each other; in the latter case we trust, and get betrayed; and then what remains?—the halter. I would bet this Damascus sword of mine, that you yourself, with all your generosity, if the Pope or King Manfred would promise you an estate, on condition of betraying

us, you would without a moment's hesitation sell us all, like sheep to the butcher, body and soul . . ."

"Drengotto!" cried Ghino, and his hand flew to his dagger.

But the wretch, continuing his sarcastic loquacity, continued: "But we keep a watch on you, because we have no better opinion of you, than you, if you are wise, ought to have of ourselves. Hence let every one do as he pleases; let us be united while we can. When we cannot, we will destroy each other, as it will be most useful to us. In the meanwhile allow us to *propagate* our pilgrim. Liberty of action! hurrah for liberty!"

"Liberty of action!" cried some of the band ferociously, and started to seize again the pilgrim; but this latter, taking advantage of the dispute, had crawled cautiously behind them, and taken to his heels, so that by this time he was miles off. Having thus remained defeated in their intent, they wanted to let the dogs loose, search him through the forest, find him by all means, and *propagate* him. Ghino however, seconded by a part of them, drew his sword, exclaiming: "I forbid it."

"Let us do it, or we'll kill you!" cried the followers of Drengotto.

"Kill me? mean rascals!" cried Ghino, brandishing his sword. "Come on!"

"Come on!" And they would have come to blows, had not Drengotto interposed, saying:

"Peace! peace! my masters! Listen to me first. Ghino, as you perceive, we hold two different opinions; we shall never be able to agree with words. We may talk and talk even to the last day, each would persist in his own idea; and besides, it would take too long for one to convince the other: let us settle it with the poniard, which is the shortest way. Let us not do like the potentates of the earth, who, when they have a quarrel to settle between them, oblige the herds of men to murder each other in the name of glory, without knowing why. Why should our companions kill each other, and thus disappoint the gallows? The quarrel was between us two,

let us settle it between ourselves ; let us trust to the *judgment of God.*" *

"And God has doomed you, for my sword has never missed a blow."

"I know this too well ; nor must you imagine that I want a regular duel with you ; you are stronger and more skilful in arms than I. You have practised sword and lance ever since your childhood, while I was reading codes and comments in the University of Bologna. Let us fight so that no one of us should have any advantage over the other. Let us throw our poniards on the ground, take the distance of one hundred steps, you on one side, I on the other. At the given signal we will both run to seize them : who reaches first, strikes. What say you to that ?"

The banditti were silent. Ghino sheathed his sword, drew the poniard, and showing it to Drengotto, said :

"You wish it ? Hark ye, I have overtaken the goat in his flight, and God will put wings to my feet, because it is His cause."

"So much the better for you. What is the use of talking any more ? Our companions expected to see the pilgrim *propaginated*. He escaped on your account ; they must have a feast at any rate."

"Be it as you will, and your blood be on your own head." Saying this, Ghino stood a moment pensive ; then, shaking his head, threw the poniard down so violently that it stuck more than half in the ground ; then, turning his back, was about proceeding to his post. Drengotto spied this movement, and rushing swiftly was on the point of treacherously stabbing Ghino in the back, when the blade of a sword, emerging from behind a tree, struck the assassin's arm with so much force, that his hand fell severed to the ground. The wounded man uttered a piercing cry, remained a moment standing, finally fell in a swoon. Ghino turned his head ; he comprehended the whole at one glance, and exclaimed : "There lives a God who punishes treachery !"

* Thus was called in those days a duel for the settlement of a private quarrel.—Tr.

The banditti, amazed and terror-struck, bent low their heads, muttering in spite of themselves : "There is a God !"

How was it that Rogiero had remained immovable at the adventure of the pilgrim, and came so readily to the rescue of the chief of the banditti? This will be easily explained by recalling what Lavater says respecting the different effects of physiognomies. "We meet sometimes certain faces," says he, "that at the first sight become the pleasure of our eyes, and the joy of our hearts. They seem to us as faces that we must have met before ; we love them without knowing why, or being able to help it : while, on the contrary, we meet others which inspire us with a feeling of repugnance and aversion ; our reason may prevent our hating them, but they will never inspire love in our souls." This feeling must have actuated Rogiero.

His sudden appearance, the rich armor he wore, and the beautiful face, gave him the air of St. George conquering the dragon, and the superstitious minds of the banditti would have adored him for a St. George, or a St. Michael, if Ghino, advancing frankly, and taking him by the hand, had not said : "I owe you my life, brave knight."

Nor did he say more, but the manner with which those words were spoken showed Rogiero that he had found a friend, one who would have given his property, his life, his whole to see him happy ; showed him, in fact, all those feelings, which no language in the world can express, and even if it could, the heart would disdain to proffer, for profound gratitude is dumb.

These events took place in a very short space of time. Ghino, having welcomed Rogiero, turned immediately to Drengotto, and helped his companions, fastening as best they could the severed arteries, so as to prevent the further effusion of blood. Then he ordered four men to lift him up, and carry him gently to his hut, he supporting the head. As they went on, the wounded man came to his senses, and raising his eyes, saw Ghino, to whom in a feeble voice he spoke thus :

"What a curious man you are, Sir Ghino ! Now what do you mean by this pretended compassion ? You neither ought nor can feel any for me. Did I not attempt to kill you ?—and treacherously, fools would say. What is treachery ? You offended me, I had a right to a revenge ; I could not obtain it by fight ; it would have been adding injury to insult, for you were the stronger ; I attempted it as best I could ; I did not succeed ;—patience ! It was a quarrel between us two ; chance decided it against me ; and I grieve no more at it than the physician whose patient dies, or the lawyer who has lost a case. Do go, then ; this compassion of yours is an insult to me. What matters if I have a hand the less ? Nature has provided for it, for she has given us two. Since we are born to die, it is best that we go off by degrees rather than all at once. In this way we get used to it :—first a hand, then a foot. Somebody had to pay for the fiddle ; it fell to my lot ;—patience ! Indeed, betting has always been my ruin !"

Ghino endeavored to soothe him, but he had again fallen into a swoon. On arriving at the hut, the leader ordered Beltramo to take good care of him, and watch over him during the night ; then turning to the others who had followed him, said, with a solemn voice : "Let Dren-gotto's fate be an example to you ; I pardon the guilty."

After which, offering Rogiero hospitality for the night, he led the way through some very intricate paths of the forest to his dwelling. Rogiero willingly accepted, for, besides experiencing a great need of food and rest, he derived great pleasure from Ghino's society. We will let them go, for Ghino knows the way ; we will instead put an end to this *chapter*, and to the *life* of Drengotto.

The banditti, dismissed by Ghino, dispersed with various feelings and deep thoughts.

The four who had carried Drengotto laid him upon the bed, and Beltramo, turning pitifully to his companions, said, "Would you have the heart to leave him alone ?"

"Are you not enough ?" replied one of them ; "what could we do here all night long ?"

"We will play dice," added Beltramo.

"In that case I will remain."

"So will I.—And I," replied the others.

But Beltramo, who had a spark of humanity more than the rest, observed that Drengotto seemed yet in a swoon, to which the others replied that he was surely asleep. Deceived, if not convinced, by their assertion that he was asleep, he put his conscience at rest, and took out the dice.

"We have no wine!" they all exclaimed; but one of them, who was very impatient to begin the game, observed: "Look on that table; don't you see how well Drengotto is provided with it? Let us drink this, for it would take too long to fetch it from our huts; if Drengotto lives, we will restore it to him; if he dies, we shall have drunk it free, *which turns vinegar into Greek*,* as the poet says."

They laughed at the joke. Then taking the flasks of wine and some candles, sat themselves in a circle on the floor and began to play. They had already played several games, and drank as many flasks of wine, when a voice, that seemed to come from under ground, called, "Beltramo!"

"You are awake, Drengotto? I come directly,—it is my turn now,—I will throw the dice, and come to you."

"Beltramo!"

"Here I am—give me the dice—there is a good throw! six and four is ten, and three, thirteen—mark them, Cagnazzo, the game is not lost yet." Then getting up, he went to the wounded man's side, who said to him:

"Beltramo, while I was in a swoon . . ."

"What! were you not asleep?" exclaimed Beltramo, with great astonishment.

"While I was in a swoon," continued Drengotto without minding him, "either I made some movement, or the bandage . . ."

"Three, three! I only need one to win the game!" shouted a bandit.

* Excellent Italian wine, so called because the original vines had been first introduced from Greece.

"It is your turn, Beltramo ; they need only one to win."

"Only one ! How can that be ?—wait one moment, Drengotto, I will throw the dice, and return."

"The bandage was badly fastened, and the blood . . ."

Beltramo stopped short. "The blood ?" repeated he carelessly, and then added : "Cagnazzo, throw for me, for I can't now."

"The blood of my body oozed entirely away from my open veins, and I am dying :—look !" He removed the covering—miserable spectacle ! He was weltering in blood.

"Thirteen !—Won !—We have won, Beltramo ;—they are losing five games."

"Mark them in the wall, to avoid questions. . . . Blessed Virgin ! Why did you not call me before, Drengotto ?" said Beltramo, endeavoring to rebind the wound.

"It is of no use now," replied Drengotto, smiling. "It is all over, *consummatum est*,—I called you only to hear my will ; and you also, my companions, come near and be witnesses to my last wishes."

The banditti, who had finished the game, and without the fourth could not go on well, arose, and each with a glass in their hands approached the bed of the wounded man. He, seeing them all ready to listen, began :

"On this twelfth day of, etc. . . . etc. . . . Whereas I am fast approaching my end . . . with a very sound mind, as it has always been ; I leave my soul to whomever it belongs, and my body, considering that its skin is not worth much, to the 'beasts of the field,' and the 'fowls of the air.'—*Item*, I leave my arms and clothes to whoever gets hold of them.—*Item*, my money to you four that you may have masses performed, or gamble it away at dice.—*Item*, to all of you the wine that I possess in my hut, so that you may spend this night merrily and the next, if there happen to be any left . . ."

"Oh ! we have already taken it," they all exclaimed.

"So much the better ; let the notary expunge that *item*," said the dying man, smiling. "Then I institute

sole heir of all my debts Beltramo di Tafo, who has watched me so tenderly in this my last illness."

"Oh! small matter, small matter, Drengotto. You in my case would have done the same."

"I suppose so, Beltramo. I beg you only for a special favor, and conjure you not to deny it to our old friendship. Should they take a notion to bury my body, look for my hand, it must have been left there in the wood—and place it in my grave beside me, so that I may easily find it when the archangel shall call in the last day of judgment; otherwise who knows where on earth they will throw it, and I may be delayed a long time searching for it, when I'd rather be of the first, to hear what they are going to do with me." . . . Here he smiled, but it was his last. His lips trembled, his teeth chattered violently, his eyes opened and shut with the same velocity as the wings of a butterfly when first caught. This convulsive agony lasted a very short time, gradually it became feebler and feebler; it ceased at last, and of that creature there was only left the corpse.

The banditti, who surrounded the bed with glasses in their hands, seeing him expire, lifted them up to their lips, saying: "This also is ended,—peace to his soul!" and emptied them; then, covering the body with a coverlid, returned to gamble away at dice the dead man's money.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PALMER.

—la luce di Romeo, di cui
 Fu l'opra grande e bella mal gradita.
 Ma i Provenzali, che fer contra lui,
 Non hanno riso : e però mal cammina
 Qual si fa danno del ben fare altrui.
 Quattro figlie ebbe, e ciascuna reina,
 Ramondo Berlinghieri, e ciò gli fece
 Romeo, persona umile e peregrina ;
 E poi il mosser le parole bieche
 A dimandar ragione a questo giusto,
 Che gli assegnò sette e cinque per diece.
 Indi partissi povero e vetusto ;
 E se'l mondo sapesse il cuor ch'egli ebbe
 Mendicando sua vita a frusto a frusto,
 Assai lo loda, e più lo loderebbe.

DANTE, *Paradiso, Canto 6.*

The lustrę shines of Romeo, whose meed
 For fair and goodly works was rendered not.
 The Provençals, they who 'gainst him proceed,
 Have little cause for mirth: ill fares his way
 Who draws from others' good his own ill deed.
 Four daughters had Count Raymond Berenger,
 And each became a queen through Romeo.
 Yet he was humbly born, of foreign clay.
 But envious tongues the count affected so,
 He asked that just man reckoning of his store,
 Who would for ten a twelve-fold increase show.
 Then Romeo departed, old and poor :
 But were that lofty courage known to men,
 With which he begged a crust from door to door,
 More than their present praise were given him then.
 M. G. M.



GOOD Romeo (a palmer),* returning from St. Jacopo di Galizia, was dragging his weary steps towards night-fall through the streets of Marseilles ; weakened by years and by the length of his journey, he sought for an inn where for that night he

* *Romeo*, a palmer, but more properly those that returned from a pilgrimage to Rome, yet used also for those who returned from Palestine.

could rest his aching limbs. Having passed through many streets of the city, he stopped at length before a splendid palace, whence proceeded a brilliant light, and the harmonious sounds of music and singing; he saw ladies and knights, richly dressed, passing and repassing; he saw squires very busy, stewards running here and there with their silver maces, for all was conducted in the best order, and seneschals, and men-servants bearing up and down the stairs most precious vases with exquisite refreshments: all, in short, bore witness to a great feast within. The palmer approaching one of the men assembled before the door, asked him a simple question, and learned that the palace belonged to Monseigneur Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence. At this time the great renown of Count Raymond was spread through all Christendom, for he came of high lineage, having the same origin as the House of Arragon and the Count of Toulouse, and was also a very prudent, courageous and courteous lord, and a doer of all heroic deeds. The bravest knights of Provence, France, and Catalonia repaired to his court, as also the most celebrated troubadours of those times, and he himself took much pleasure in breaking a lance in the tournament, or in singing a love song in the company of ladies.

The palmer decided how to test the courtesy of the count, and without another thought walked boldly into the court. The knights wondered that a beggar should have the audacity to come among them, and each one avoided him, and, as if fearful that their silken garments should be soiled by touching those of the poor pilgrim, they drew back; it thus happened, that instead of degrading him, as they had expected, they exalted him, for he advanced alone, between two files of ladies and cavaliers, who, however scornfully disposed they might have been, did not manifest their ill-feelings externally, and that attitude was very respectful.

Count Raymond, who, in order to enjoy a full view of the revel, was seated upon a throne-like platform, elevated in the principal part of the hall, no sooner saw the palmer advance, than he descended, and going to meet him, gave

him a gracious reception, saying : " Good palmer, you are most welcome to our court ; dispose of everything around you, as may best give you pleasure, for we wish you to be here as lord and master."

" Monseigneur Count, now I see that report, although it speaks highly of your courtesy, cannot say so much, but that it falls short of the truth. I came here to make the experiment, whether in the hour of pride you would disdain to look upon a servant of God, weakened by years and weary with his journey ; but you, count, have left pride to the coward hearts which have yielded to its power, and although they may conceal it with bones and flesh, they cannot hide it from the eye of the Eternal." He then glanced severely towards the knights, who, too good courtiers to avoid the look, smilingly returned it. The good pilgrim, disdaining their flatteries as he had their scorn, continued speaking to Count Raymond. " You are not ashamed to fulfil the hopes of the poor, who put their trust in you ; you give them what they need without being asked, for he who sees the need and awaits the request, is almost prepared to deny it. You will be rewarded in this life and in the next. The blessing of the Lord will rest upon you. He will exalt you above your rivals, glorify you above your enemies, and your name will be preserved in your posterity, as the fragrance of myrrh, after the fire has consumed its substance."

The knights and ladies were astonished at hearing the pilgrim speak so wisely, and looked upon him as a remarkable man. Count Raymond, well pleased, replied with kindness : " We give you infinite thanks, good palmer, for the faith you have placed in our courtesy, although it is not worth remembering ; for we should greatly wrong, we do not say our brothers in knighthood, but our poorest vassals, in suspecting that they would close their doors against the poor palmer."

" Not the act, but the manner, Monseigneur Count, gains the heart ; there are some who deny in so kind a manner, that you love them more than those who give churlishly."

Then Count Raymond took the palmer by the hand,

and led him to the most retired apartments, and caused refreshments to be placed before him. Observing his fatigue, he would not engage him longer in conversation, but ordered a fresh room to be prepared, and left him to repose, while he returned to the feast.

The next morning, the count, rising very early, retired to the garden, not so much to meditate with an undisturbed mind upon the affairs of the state, then threatened with war by the Count de Toulouse, as to collect some images of the dawn to embellish some verses which he intended to send to the lady of his thoughts. Sauntering along, wrapped in his own meditations, he met the palmer, who, also rising early, had come there to greet the lord with the first rays of the rising sun. He, after paying due homage, asked the count why he seemed so troubled. Raymond, although by nature very cautious, at once placed so much faith in the pilgrim, that, without hesitation, he confided his thoughts to him; and the palmer aided him with such sage advice, that it seemed to Raymond, that rather than wish to avoid the war with the Count de Toulouse, he ought to desire it, since he had so expert and able a counsellor. He told him, nevertheless, that he would not force him to remain, but that he should go or stay at his own pleasure; yet, if his desire had any weight, he entreated him to stay. If Raymond was charmed with the character of the palmer, the latter was no less so with Raymond, hence they agreed perfectly; nor was it long before the palmer became his guide and leader in everything. He always wore his religious dress, and so judicious was he in his management, that the count, though still retaining the same magnificent court, increased his treasury more than two-thirds, and when the war actually broke out with the Count de Toulouse (who was the greatest prince in the world, having fourteen counts under him), upon the question of their boundaries, so many knights and barons, either from courtesy to Raymond, or on account of his wealth, or through the palmer's influence, fought under the banners of Provence, that the Count de Toulouse was worsted.

Now it happened that Count Raymond had four mar-

riageable daughters, and like all fathers, wished to marry them to great and powerful lords, or make them queens and empresses if possible ; but he was at a loss how to accomplish it, for his wealth was insufficient to give them all the dowries of queens. The palmer advised him to give himself no concern, as he would provide for them. In the first place, he married the eldest to Louis IX. of France, with a very large dowry. Being reproved by the count, he replied : " Leave it to me, monseigneur, for the eldest being married with great cost, you will marry the others with less, on account of the relationship." And it all happened as he had predicted, for Edward III. of England, in order to be brother-in-law to the King of France, married the second with a small dowry ; and soon after, Richard of Cornwall, his brother, chosen king of the Romans, married the third. The fourth remained at home, and the palmer said to Raymond : " We will give her to some brave man, who may hold the place of son and successor to you." The count consenting, he married her to Charles d'Anjou, brother of King Louis of France, who, he assured Raymond, would become one of the best and most powerful lords in the world.

After so many years of loyalty and service, malicious envy, the curse of the world, and the vice of courts, began to whisper in Raymond's ear that the palmer had betrayed him, and robbed him of his riches. At first he gave no heed to the scandal, but hearing it daily repeated, he determined to demand from the palmer an account of his transactions. He, already prepared for it, showed his documents, gave a reason for everything, and asked his dismissal. The count, conscious that he had acted unworthily, with humble excuses defended himself, and urgently begged him not to leave him, now that they had passed so great a part of their lives together ; but the palmer checked all remonstrance by saying : " No, Monseigneur Raymond, let us part now while we are friends ; our separation will be very bitter, but each will leave to the other a remembrance that he will with pleasure recall to his mind. If I remain, we may not be able to do so. You are old, and with old age comes infirmity of

body and suspicion of mind. This may be a vice of age ; it may be the result of experience, which proves that men are more ready to deceive than to be loyal : at any rate, suspicion is the companion of old age, and would to Heaven it were the only one ! This sudden questioning of my conduct, although you might have remembered that from a humble condition I have raised you to great power, assures me that your age is not exempt from its common mistrust, either arising spontaneously in your mind, or the work of others. Now, thank God, I have been able to satisfy your demands ; another time, I might not be able to do so, for, as proofs sometimes fail to convict one of crime, so they may also fail to show one's innocence : and then you would punish me, and commit an act which would irreparably stain your hitherto untarnished honor. Let us then provide, while there is time, for my safety, and for your good name ; forasmuch as death would separate us by force, let us part voluntarily. Adieu ! It is a word full of sorrow, but it must needs be said. May your remaining years be peaceful and glorious ; may those who have removed me from you, serve you as loyally as I. Poor I entered this court, poor will I leave it. The wallet and staff, which I have preserved, as a precious gift of misery, with which I look upon myself as rich, and above riches, shall be my dress. My legs, although weak, my palfrey :—adieu. Whatever I may have merited as a reward of my labors, either keep, or give to the poor in Christ. Adieu, my dear lord, adieu ! We shall meet in heaven."

Although the count besought him with prayers and tears, he could not prevail upon him to remain. The palmer departed in his humble dress, bearing with him the love and good wishes of all. Raymond, with his vassals, followed him, uttering sad laments ; reaching the gate of the city, the palmer embraced the count, kissed him, and once more taking leave, recommended him to the care of God. Of the rest, he could not take the same leave ; therefore, raising his hands, he blessed them ; and they, kneeling, sighing, weeping and sobbing, as if each one

had lost father or mother, received his benediction. As the palmer came, so he departed, nor was it ever known whence he came or whither he went, but the greater number of those who saw and spoke to him, believed him to be a saint.

Count Raymond did not long survive the departure of the palmer, and by his death Provence fell under the dominion of his son-in-law, Charles.

Charles, the son of Louis VIII., and Bianca of Castile, as son of France, possessed the county of Anjou, and the seignory of Folcacchieri; as husband of Beatrice, Provence, Languedoc, and part of Piedmont. What he was in person and manners we find gracefully narrated in a history of that century,* which we have taken as a guide for this chapter: wise, magnanimous, of lofty intellect, stern, firm in adversity, faithful to his word, speaking little, working much; smiling seldom, and slightly; liberal of his own wealth, and desirous of that of others; he valued little troubadours, minstrels, jugglers, and buffoons; he slept little, and was accustomed to say that the less he slept the longer he lived; his glance was fierce; he was tall, muscular, and of an olive complexion: *au reste*, religious, and, as far as a soldier can be, honest.

Persuaded by St. Louis of France to join the crusade against Jerusalem, in 1250, he, together with his brother, and the first barony of France, fell into the power of the infidels near Damietta. Liberated from prison, he returned to Provence, where he was compelled to sustain many conflicts with his vassals, whose rights he wished to annul, and over whom he wished to make himself absolute master.

About this time he received news of his election by Urban IV. to the kingdom of Sicily, brought to him by Cardinal Simon de Tours. After holding a consultation with the King of France, the Count d'Artois and the Count d'Alençon, his brothers, who, in order to get rid of this ambitious man, encouraged him to the enterprise, and offered to assist him with arms and money, he agreed

* Giovanni Villani. L. 6, c. 91.

to prepare himself for the enterprise in honor of God and of the Holy Roman Church.

If natural avarice stimulated him to this undertaking, no less did the urgent entreaties of his wife Beatrice, who, to add to the treasury, sold all her jewels—the greatest sacrifice that any woman in the world can make. The reason of this zeal on the part of Beatrice, as the chronicles of the time relate, was that shortly before, she had met her sisters at Paris to celebrate in the court of her brother-in-law the festival of Christmas. She was present with them on the day of the Epiphany, at the Feast of Kings, which the monarchs of France were accustomed to solemnize in the Church of Saint Denis. There, because she was not entitled to wear a royal crown, they had caused her seat to be placed one step lower than theirs. Many were the arts adopted by this ambitious woman, and perhaps not all to be narrated, to draw over to her side the flower of French chivalry.

There were in those days two powerful incentives to undertake the war: the courtesy of knights in not refusing any enterprise asked by their lady-loves, and the spirit of religion. Both of these were put into requisition, the first by Beatrice, the second by the legates of the Pope, who preached throughout France the crusade against Manfred, promising the remission of sins and the same indulgences that rewarded the Crusaders in Palestine. But for those who valued lightly woman's flatteries and the indulgences of the church (and this latter class, the chronicles say, was by far the more numerous), the desire of great pay was enough to enlist them under the standard of Charles. Add to all these things the natural eagerness of the French for adventures, and the reader need not be astonished to learn that his army amounted to sixty thousand men, including cavaliers, archers, and infantry of all kinds.

The death of Urban IV. and the election of Clement IV. to the Pontificate, far from interrupting, rather hastened the event, for Clement was a vassal of Charles, and a most zealous supporter of his rights. He had, in early life, a wife and children, and was considered a

most able lawyer. His wife dying, he became a priest, and rose successively to the dignities of Bishop of Pois, Cardinal of Narbonne, Legate to England, and finally Pope. Bartolommeo Pignattello, Archbishop of Cosenza, vassal and enemy of Manfred, sent in great haste to Provence, and, uniting with Simon, Cardinal of St. Cecilia, excited Charles to set sail for Italy.

Manfred was not disheartened at the news of so many armaments, but, like a brave and high-spirited man, made all the necessary arrangements to receive his enemy. He took particular care to guard the boundaries of his dominions, fortifying Cepperano, San Germano, and placing a chosen guard in Benevento. By sea he was protected by his galleys, which having been joined by those of the Genoese and the Pisans, amounted in all to more than eighty. All the forces of the King of France, not to mention those of a count, appeared insufficient to injure him; but nevertheless, so little are human plans to be depended upon, that both by sea and land he was beaten with wonderful facility, as we shall narrate in the course of this history.

Now Charles, considering of how great moment his presence in Italy would be, and thinking that another opportunity might not present itself, determined, although many tried to dissuade him from it, to set sail immediately, and go directly to Rome. He was well aware that Manfred had guarded all the Roman shore, nor was he ignorant that his own fleet was hardly one quarter as large as that of his enemy; nevertheless, he appointed Guy de Montfort generalissimo of the land forces, and commending the Countess Beatrice to his protection, and confiding in the motto, which he was accustomed often to repeat, "Good care conquers evil fortune," he leaped aboard ship, and commanded the prow to be turned towards desired Italy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NAVAL BATTLE.

He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
 Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffined, and unknown.
 BYRON, *Childe Harold, Canto IV.*



OME, let us admire the glories of creation upon the last shores of the ocean. Behold, it rests with the quietude of the lion ; no wind dares to wrinkle its azure surface, no wave to groan among its breakers. It seems a mirror in which the firmament loves to reflect its treasures. The eye of man watches far and far in search of a boundary which the weakness of its construction hath impressed upon his sight, but which the ocean has never known. Our look is lost over the multitude of the waters, and is finally forced to lower itself to the ground, whilst our mind grieves at the thought that human nature is incapable of sustaining long the contemplation of the elements ;—like unto the presumptuous mind that dares to attempt penetrating within the clouds which surround the throne of the Omnipotent, after long wandering from abyss into abyss of the intellectual world, is overcome by the magnitude of the imagination, worn out by meditation, convinced by the certainty that the Eternal cannot be comprehended by the creature destined to die. Thus like is the calm of the ocean ; and yet the planet of life and light seems to approach it trembling, as the suppliant to the throne of his Lord ; most of the time pale and without ray ; and the ocean absorbs it in its bosom, as the earth the dead.

But when this mass of water, furiously raging, as if anxious to regain its ancient dominion (since the earth emerged from the depths of the sea at God's command),*

* GENESIS, c. I.

breaks against the shore, where it finds the insuperable barrier, and the only one worthy of subduing its frightful power,—the Creator's word which repulses it back,—when, rolling in the might of its immensity, it overturns the bark that it meets in its fatal course, whence the mariner, despairing of every human help, looks to heaven, but heaven shows itself to him threatening,—there is no escape; the billows which he sees mounting from afar will execute the sentence of death that nature has pronounced against him. Then, among the thoughts of the future life, there is mingled sadly the recollection of his dear family, which tears his heart:—and his children?—and his wife?—does she sleep? Above the howling of the wind, above the roaring of the sea, she seems to hear her name sighed in the delirium of a horrible agony; she starts terrified, runs to the shore, but discerns naught but foaming waves and darkened sky. May God rest in peace the soul of the shipwrecked! But ought he to have challenged the terrible element with the weight of his children on his heart? When all is destruction, when all is fear and terror, happy that brave man who can joyfully roam upon the edge of the cliff, and smile, with the same smile with which one greets his dearest friends, at the waves, that, after having submerged thousands of ships, come to break against the rocks of the shore! Happy he who can listen to the roaring of the thunder, to the wild howls of the sea-monsters as to a sweet harmony, a voice of love, like the one that used to lull him to sleep in infancy!—but happier by far he who, in the hour of storm, could entrust his body to the angry waves! The bystanders begged him for the madonna and the saints not to attempt it; but he, despising the advices of fear, delighted to see himself elevated above the abyss, the description of which would make every one shudder. Indeed, he seemed like an atom wandering through space; he knew the danger, he looked death in the face, nor did he tremble; and in recompense his soul was purified of many earthly passions, of many human weaknesses. He learned that he alone can call himself happy who does not fear death; and, superior to all worldly miseries,

he discovered things which he is neither able to tell nor others to understand, but the remembrance of which remains in his mind as a pledge of future greatness. Now this brave one, elevated on the summit of a wave, soars himself higher than the earth, discerning the distant shores and his companions ; now lowered to the very depth, he admires the overwhelming waters surround him like a wall, and their tops foaming and hissing like snakes upon the head of Medusa ; but yet he overcame them, and when it pleased him returned safe to the shore. He alone has the right of speaking of the ocean : let him lay his hand upon its mane as upon the altar of God, and say, "*I am worthy of thee.*" Come, let us adore the glories of creation upon the last shores of the ocean.

I love thee, O ocean ! with the same love with which my brothers of folly admire the face of woman ; I rejoice at the sound of thy breakers, at thy rest, and thy tempests ; free from the beginning of creation, no tyrant has been able to impose laws on thee ; no ambitions, either by flattery or force, control thee ; the changes of years and seasons are nothing for thee : that barbarian king who wished to impose chains on thee stands as a monument of mockery in history. Chains were made only for men.

Thou immense, thou powerful, O ocean ! since chaos was water, and will return into water. In that last moment light will be again extinguished in its ancient element. Fire, thy enemy, will be conquered, and thy victory announced to the world with its own destruction : no more stars, neither moon, nor heaven, nor earth. Thou wilt exult in thy triumph, in the solitude of thy mightiness ; yet, whilst there remains in me a spark of life, I will stroll upon thy last shores, and adore the glories of creation in the power of the ocean.

It is now three days since Charles d'Anjou sailed over the ocean with the eagerness of a heart panting for a crown. Often sitting at dinner, or playing at chess, when least they expect it, he starts from the table, ascends on deck, gazes intently towards the South, and exclaims with a voice both nervous and joyous : "Is that Italy ?"

"No, monseigneur, it is a cloud," the pilot answers ; and Charles, disappointed, returns again whence he had come.

Nowadays, a man, no matter how ignorant, easily understands that the robber has either no feeling at all, when he is about appropriating another's property, or if he has any, it must be very similar to that of a conqueror. It is true that the latter strives to adorn it with the lofty fancies of glory ; but flattery, which magnifies the crime of the strong,—a crime which is punished in the weak,—the difference of name,—calling the latter a deed, an enterprise, a conquest, what in the former would be called a theft,—does not appease conscience ; for what is taken from others, be it much or little, be it with thousands of armed men or with one hand alone, either must be considered a crime for all, or for none. Punishment is very much like a sign-board, which the more glaringly it is painted, the less the inn is comfortable, and the wine good ; it may surely be set down as a mark to pass off bad merchandise for good, and which for centuries has deceived the world, and will continue still. If we meditate well on the history of the world, we will find that the origin of punishment has been more a matter of force than of reason. I have written these thoughts not because Charles had the slightest remorse for the great theft which he was about to commit, but because they happened to come to my mind just now. What now agitated the mind of Charles was the idea of the great danger, together with a certain magnanimous feeling, which made him desirous of perilous deeds. Such mixture of old habits and new sensations is not easy to describe ; it was not a desire of flight, and yet a beginning of fear, which made him nervous ; not even a desire to hurry on the enterprise ; and yet Charles, whenever they replied that it was not land, but a cloud, the object which he thought was Italy, sighed disappointedly.

Charles acted restlessly, nor could the barons whom he had chosen for companions in any way soothe him. They had fought at his side, both in Palestine and Provence ; they were famous in arms, but rigid as the armor

that covered them ;—faces that never smiled ; ignorant of everything, except their sword and iron mace—for in that consisted all the education of the noblemen of those days. They might have narrated past adventures, and with the recital of perils escaped, encourage each other to withstand bravely the approaching ones ; but when the mind waits anxiously on the hilt of the sword, there is hardly one who can relate, nor others who can listen to stories of old times. Our barons, at the slightest noise, would start with arms in their hands, fearful of being attacked ; nor because they had been often deceived, did they relax their suspicious anxiety.

The captain of the galley was a *Provençal*, with red face, and red, curly hair, a merry fellow, a good judge of wine, and a special admirer of champagne ; otherwise, his learning amounted only to being able to sing half a dozen tavern songs, and to swear by every oath that ran through the mouths of all the seafaring men of those days ; but since, whenever the stern countenance of Charles appeared, the *gay song* would suddenly cease, and more so the oaths, because the count was very religious, or pretended to be, all the wit of the poor commander was reduced to naught, and he stood on deck as a dead man. He might have talked of wine, but how could he have had the courage to approach the subject with a prince who only drank water ? The poor captain was in despair.

A profound silence, therefore, interrupted only by the splashing of the oars, or by the wind flapping on the sails, reigned throughout the galley. On the fourth day of navigation, towards evening, Charles, noticing by the motion that the galley was transported more violently over the waves than for the three previous days, left the cabin to have a look on deck. It was awfully dark :—not a ray of moon illumined the clouds, nor was there a star visible ;—it seemed as if the firmament was dead, and the moaning of the sea bewailed its loss. Charles' galley rides over the waves through a fearful darkness,—as an atom through space. The whole crew seem terror-struck :—Charles trepidates as the meanest of them, for

life is equally dear to him who handles a sceptre as to him who pulls an oar,—and perhaps there is hardly any difference between the two, except that of the instrument which they hold in their hands,—at least in the love of self-preservation. Some cried, some were silent, some prayed, others groaned. The pilot, seeing the master drunk with wine and fear, was crying from abaft: “Pull harder with your oars; furl the main sail if you wish to be saved; hurry up while you have time, otherwise we are lost,—there is land on our lee!”

Only the last words were heard of these orders: “*We are lost; there is land on our lee;*” and had consequently the contrary effect desired.

“*We are lost!*” murmured the crew to each other, and all sunk down with fear and trepidation.

The pilot, fearing that, if continuing thus, they would be inevitably lost, gave the helm in charge to a seaman whom he could trust, and rushed to where Charles was, leaning on the bulwarks. “Courage!” he exclaimed. “Monseigneur, come to cheer your crew, otherwise I see no way of safety.”

Charles started at these words, and taking the pilot’s arm, advanced to where the rowers were; who, despairing of safety, were lying idly on their benches, waiting, terrified, for imminent shipwreck.

“Friends,” cried Charles to the galley slaves, “I cannot understand how so much fear could have taken hold of people used to a sea life. Are you women, that you so easily give up in despair, as if the end of the world had come? For shame! We have escaped far greater perils, and with the aid of God first, and St. Denis, we will overcome this. Don’t you see that your own apathy will lose the ship, and thus you will inevitably run against death? Think that you will have to answer to God for thus having thrown away your life. Protect it then, for I, from this moment, enfranchise you; therefore, cheer up and do your best for the preservation of your life, and the liberty which I have granted to you.”

“Friends!” Charles, that proud man, who boasted of a thousand royal ancestors, has called with the name of

friends a vile crew composed mostly of men bought as beasts in the market, or of convicts condemned to serve the state for crimes committed against private individuals ! Yet Charles has said so. Oh ! I wonder whether the proud conqueror has ever fallen so low as when necessity compels him to be on a level, and without distinction, with the other race of Adam. *Liberty !* - Great heavens ! *Liberty !* on the lips of Charles d'Anjou, who is carrying chains to a whole kingdom !

"*Liberty ! Liberty !*" was heard exclaimed throughout the galley with such a tumult that it prevailed over the noise of the agitated waves. "*Liberty !*" and they all bent on their oars to get away from the dangerous coast. The galley, cutting through the billows, succeeded in escaping the rocks, but she was running the risk of encountering some of the galleys which King Manfred kept watching on the coast. That danger, however, was uncertain, for they also must be tossed about by the storm, while the present was inevitable ; therefore, better avoid this for the moment ; for the other they will provide when necessary. Thus thought Charles, and according to all human calculations he was right. The chain of events, however, which we cannot foresee nor prevent, and which we call *fortune*, smiled over all those reasonings, and disposed totally different from what monseigneur the count had devised.

All at once the wind, as if worn out by the long effort, ceased of a sudden ; then began thunder and lightning, then a pouring of hail and rain. In that night Charles had to experience all the sufferings of men who spend their lives at sea. An hour had already passed since they wandered thus, without knowing where, flying over the waves, when, of a sudden, the galley struck against a solid body, and her timbers shivered so that it seemed as if she would go to pieces. A cry was raised—the cry of despair ! for they feared to have struck against a rock, but when their cry ceased, they heard another not less terrible near by. "Is it one of our galleys that has collided with us ?" said part of the sailors ; and others, "No, it is a Genoese galleon ; we have recog-

nized it by its shape ;” and others, “no, it is Sicilian ;” others other things ; but all agreed that it belonged to the enemy.

“The enemy ! the enemy !” they cried from both the galleys ; and if the crews had been allowed to express their own desires, they would have let each other alone for that night.

But Charles d’Anjou, who was really a brave warrior, was not moved at those cries, and as he could not avoid the battle, he magnanimously strove to come victoriously out of it.

“Noble barons !” said he, playfully, to the surrounding knights, who were already, with arms in their hands, at his side, “the Church, in calling us to Sicily, has not invited us to a wedding feast ; the tables are ready, and we must put a good face on whatever is in store for us. If we had the slightest doubt of your courage, we would endeavor to encourage you to the battle by speeches, as it has been the custom of captains in all ages ; but we have fought too often together, and too often have we been in the same dangers, to suppose that a word of ours could add strength to your valor.”

Then advancing where the crew stood awestruck, “My men,” he said, “if you had the choice of running away, I would advise you to remain ; fear of death will be more powerful than my voice ; let every one do his best to save his life.”

I will not say that this strange speech infused any sudden courage in those wretched beings, but spoken by a man with Charles’ reputation, it was able to give them some lingering hope of safety if they imitated him in his actions ; and truly, though not very enthusiastically, they followed him in the fight.

“Get the hooks ! Get the hooks !” was heard Charles’ voice calling out (these were long poles with large hooks on one end to grapple an enemy’s vessel, and keep it fast to one’s own, in order to come to a hand-to-hand fight). They were immediately brought, and put to use. These however were not sufficient to accomplish the object, because the two galleys, tossed by the waves,

knocked fearfully against each other, or furiously parting, tore them from the hands of those who held them. It happened that some of the crew unwilling to leave hold of them were lifted out from the deck, and suspended to the poles, so that when the galleys came to knock against each other again either they were miserably crushed, or, unable to sustain themselves long hanging from them, fell into the water and were drowned. Charles, holding his iron mace, with a foot on the bulwark of the galley, watched anxiously the moment that it approached the other, and then he would strike blows that seldom fell in vain. His companions followed his example with battle-axes, and in a short time they had caused the enemy severe losses both in killed and wounded. These however held their own, exchanging blow for blow, and boldly sustaining the brunt of battle. One would have seen the rigging dripping with blood, the deck with scattered brains and severed limbs; dead bodies hanging across the bulwarks, and gradually sliding overboard; others fallen supine, entangling the legs of their mates, and causing them to fall headlong into the sea; some badly wounded running abaft uttering piercing cries, while the rest, unmoved by the slaughter, pushed their way through the dead and wounded to be among the first to kill or be killed.

In the meanwhile the storm was again raging in the fulness of its fury over their heads; but the fury of the unbridled elements is wonderfully solemn, and truly deserving the observer's attention. They seem like giants who cannot be destroyed, and who have met in the fields of the heavens not to challenge each other to death, but to show their might; now there prevails this, now that element, until weary of the strife they retire without victory to return whenever it suits them to new experiments. Not so with the fury of men: every one of their acts is a road to destruction; small and fierce, they give the idea of a heap of maddened ants, intent to devour each other over a mound of earth; death, that holds a foot over it, stops to wonder how in those little bodies burns the fury of extinguishing each other without his help. Imbecile race, even in the acts that in the greater part of them are

cause of tears, it deserves a smile of contempt from him who enjoys the spectacle of a tempest.

That battle fought thus at random produced no good effect. More than an hour they had exchanged blows, many fell dead on both sides, but no one seemed disposed to yield.

The pilot, who had returned to the helm, a man of impulsive character, seeing the battle flag, and desirous of joining in the *mêlée*, left the helm again in charge of an expert seaman, giving him directions how to govern the ship, and rushed below deck to arm himself.

Meeting the captain of the galley, he said to him :

"What are you doing thus armed?"

"What am I doing? What can be done with a battle axe in one's hand when they are fighting on deck? I mean to vent my spleen on some one there, for I am mad as fury; at any rate, if we must die to-night, I prefer to die with a blow on my head rather than drown in the water. I never expected to die drowned except in a wine-tub."

"And why did you leave the helm?"

"I left some one else in charge; but will you give me your battle-axe?"

"Yes, certainly; I will find another. But tell me what you mean to do with it?"

"The fight has been long and obstinate, victory still hangs uncertain. Charles so heavily armed dares not leap upon the Sicilian galley. . ."

"Well. . ."

"I, as more experienced at sea, will attempt this; often the turn of events depends on a sudden bold step. Men are like sheep; when one goes the others follow. . ."

"Well. . ."

"When I shall have placed my foot on the enemy's galley, I hope with the help of God to hold my ground till the others come to the rescue; otherwise the worst that can happen is to get killed."

"I will follow you, heavy as I am; come, and let us show Count Charles how to jump on the enemy's galley."

They rushed upon the poop, where the two ships were closed together, and taking a proper distance, they

leaped together over the sides. But as destiny willed, the jolly commander, who had deliberated to fight rather than be drowned, whether on account of his weight, or too much wine, in placing his foot on the enemy's galley hit fatally with his heel against the rail, and fell headlong in the water. He cried for help, but in the tumult of the battle no one heard or heeded him.

The pilot, more fortunate than his companion, jumped safely upon the Sicilian galley, and at the same moment struck a blow with his battle-axe on the head of the first man who came threateningly against him, and cleft it in two. The wounded man uttered a cry, and was about raising his hands to the wound, but death loosened his arms before he could accomplish the act, and he fell at the feet of the pilot. He leaped over him, and passed on, but being surrounded by many, and he, as yet, all alone, had no other chance but to place his shoulders against the main-mast of the ship, and whirling furiously his battle-axe keep every one at bay.

In the meanwhile Charles, who from the moment he had seen the pilot leap with such successful audacity on the enemy's galley, felt stimulated by anger, shame, and a noble desire to come to his aid ; considering also that in the way they had fought they would come to naught, he called aloud Sir Gilles, and ordered him to summon hastily Micheaux, Labroderie, and all others that he could collect together, and bring them near him.

Sir Gilles readily obeyed. Charles, withdrawing for an instant, took off his iron gauntlets in order to be less incumbered, then returned to his post. The knights that had been called joined him, and the Count of Provence thus briefly addressed them : " Noble barons, our pilot, setting a rare example of daring and valor, has already leaped on the enemy's galley ; we allowed a glorious deed to be taken away from us, but since we cannot obtain the first glory, let us at least gain the second by promptly giving aid to our brother in arms."

After this, they all gathered close to him ; and when they had the opportunity, at a sign from Charles, they all leaped over, crying : "*Monjoy ! Monjoy !*" By a lucky

chance all reached safely the enemy's ship. That mass of men hurled with such impetus fell so irresistibly against the Sicilians that at the first onslaught they staggered back; but regaining courage, these latter repulsed the French, who began to yield, and gradually fell back so far, that another step would have pitched them overboard. Rarely it happens that man, placed between death and desperate defence, does not overcome the trial. The French regained, though with hard labor, the lost space. The pressure was such that they could not use their battle-axes either by the edge or by the point. It was a pushing and pressing, backwards and forwards, rather than a regular battle. Charles, being a daring man, dropped suddenly his battle-axe, grappled his adversary by the throat, and pressed it so, that he felled him strangled to the ground: some of the strongest of his companions had the same thought, and succeeded in it, for the Sicilians had no suspicion of such a mode of warfare. Others who had poniards used them. Then the enemy drew back, and, being for the most part wounded, hesitated to give a new assault. This instant of hesitation decided the battle, since the French having clear space to manage their battle-axes, in which they were very expert, obliged them shortly to sue for quarter, which by order of Charles was immediately granted.

Having obtained the victory, his first thought was to search for the pilot, whose example had been the first inducement to board the galley. They found him under a heap of dead and wounded, but fortunately not dead.

Charles lifting him up asked: "Are you wounded?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, in many places, but not mortally, I hope."

"Thank God and St. Martin of Tours! Do you wish to be carried to your galley?"

"I desire first to look for the commander; he was my companion in the attempt to the *abordage*, but I have not seen him since. He must have fallen overboard."

Charles ordered that they should search for him; then turning to the Sicilians, who were kneeling before him, he said to them: "Arise! you have done all that is

granted to living men to do ; you deserve not this humiliation, and God forbid that we should have the intention of giving it to you : fortune has conquered you ; we instead praise your prowess and admire you. If all your companions resemble you, the work to which we have been called by the Vatican will be very arduous, but worthy of a son of France ; thus, victory will be very glorious for us, and defeat without shame.—But now let us escape the storm that still rages ; you guide us, for I trust in your fidelity, because valorous men never were traitors.”

Thus spoke Charles, and God who penetrated into his heart, knew with what simulation. The truth was that he was not so readily disposed to allow himself to be navigated by the conquered, and had already said to the pilot : “You will command this galley ;” but, being expert in worldly affairs, he knew that when one cannot use armed diffidence (which is the best), there is nothing left but the ostentation of security ; and in fact that half victory of his did not reassure him at all respecting the daring and strength of the enemy.

At this point a flash of lightning illuminated the scene. Charles, his barons, and all, crossed themselves. Darkness returned, . . . then another flash ; . . . finally with a tremendous crash a thunderbolt struck the ship.—Let him who has not seen the thunderbolt fall near him, read no further ; for his imagination, no matter how lofty, will never conceive its mysterious terror ; let him who has seen it as we have recall to mind the sensation which he experienced in that moment, and this, more than our words, will give him an idea of the case we are describing.

The thunderbolt first struck the mainmast, a part of which it split, a part it burnt ; after which it spread all over deck in a thousand inflamed tongues, which made it look as if deluged with fire ; progressing thus further and further, it parted into innumerable sparks, which finding obstacles in the crevices of the galley, tore apart her flanks with a wonderful impetus leaving thus large gaps for the rushing in of the agitated, waves :—no living man could have withstood the stifling sulphuric odor and the stunning explosion. Imagine what it must have been, when

added to the meteoric flame which burned the hair and flesh of the dead and wounded on deck and blinded the sight! Both French and Italians fell backwards, as if stricken by catalepsy.

The galley, abandoned to itself, was filling with water through many fissures; even had the crew used all their efforts, they would not have been able to save her; unable as they were to move, they heard the gurgling of the water pouring into her hold; she swung for a moment, finally she pitched; the waves that had parted to receive her in their depths gathered back surging over her; she sunk to the bottom as lead in deep water. Everything disappeared: the brave and the coward, the innocent and the guilty;—and the glory of the ocean prevailed over the cry of victory.

CHAPTER X.

THE HEAD OF THE UNJUST JUDGE.

Signor, far mi convien come fa il buono
Sonator sopra il suo strumento arguto,
Che spesso muta corda, e varia suono,
Ricercando ora il grave, ora l'acuto.

ARIOSTO, *Orlando Furioso*.

My lord, so must I do, as one who plays
Skilfully on his sounding instrument,
Oft does he change the chord in various ways,
Now high, now low, harmonious sounds are blent.

M. G. M.



HAPPY was he * who, in the enthusiasm of his divine soul, knew how to vary the tones of his harp-strings, and shower celestial pleasure upon his immortal verses. Beautiful as the rainbow of God, playful as the butterfly upon the field, happy as the

* Ariosto.

greeting of a lover, he looked at earthly things through the light of his joyousness ; he drank the honey from the flowers, avoiding the poisonous by some singular instinct, or changing their baleful sweets into nectar upon his lips. Alas ! I, who from my birth have been deprived of the consolations of the imagination, left to the troubles of the world, and recalling the years of my infancy, find no place where thought loves to repose for a moment, and have passed many many nights of my fair youth seated upon the graves that inclose the generations of dust, to meditate upon misfortunes and crimes,—weeping that I was a man, and smiling to think that I was mortal,—and with the humiliating feeling of being made of clay, have bowed my head in the dust, invoking eternal darkness upon creation to conceal within it my own shame,—let not him who is born thus dare to stretch out his hand to the harp of harmony ; the strings will snap beneath his touch, the notes of misfortune and sorrow will accompany his sad voice :—no laurel of the poet, but cypress watered with tears, will be the crown for his head ; the hatred of men his reward ; their execration his applause.

Oh innocent youth, caressed by the smile of the Eternal, attracted by the flatteries of love, eager to rush upon life, and joyfully waiting for a dawn whose sun you will never see, “ Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind’s sway,” which gathers behind, live, live in the blessed illusions of the present ; do not look on these pages of mine, do not touch them, for they drip blood ! The peace of my own heart is destroyed, but I do not wish to destroy yours. Leave me to the solitude of my agonies ; what could I give you as a reward for lost happiness ? Knowledge ? Adam ate the fatal fruit, and knew that he must die ; behold the knowledge of man ! Poor animate earth, how bitter are the days that you pass upon inanimate earth !

It is Yole ! See her with slow, sad steps, walking through the alleys of the garden, one hand resting upon her heart, the other hanging motionless at her side ; her face is as white as the spotless veil that covers her bosom, but only white. Holy Virgin ! Her eyes shine with un-

natural brilliancy, and with dilated pupils are fixed in long and motionless gaze. What does the miserable girl behold? No earthly object. This sense would seem as if dead or suspended, but for a tear which slowly forms and trickles tremblingly down her cheeks, as a witness to the trouble, too great for the mind to contain. Queen Elena and Gismonda follow her at a distance. Poor, unhappy girl! She thought that their love-meeting had been discovered, feared that Rogiero had been killed, and the delicate fibres of her brain had yielded to the weight of agony. Now a thousand confused recollections flash through her mind, and on none can her thoughts rest for an instant. Then comes a dizzy reaction, a confused whirl, that gives her a sensation such as one feels, who vainly endeavors to retain some object which is constantly slipping from his grasp. Now the imaginations of her fears appear to her like events which have taken place in her presence. She hastens her step, she turns into another path, but neither by accelerating the one, nor by varying the other, can she fly from the illusions of her wandering mind; as the uncomfortable sleeper sometimes dreams that he is pursued by an indescribable and terrible demon, and, fleeing and fleeing from him, that he at length falls down; endeavoring to rise, his paralyzed limbs refuse their office, yet, on hands and knees, he continues his flight until breath fails him, and he sinks petrified by terror. Nature cannot sustain such suffering; he awakes, frightened, bathed in perspiration, stretches out his hands, knows it to be a dream, and a sigh of relief bursts from his overcharged heart. The past, to Yole, has become a cloud, the future, darkness; she recalls a love, a face, a danger, but detached and unconnected; her ideas are like the clouds, when contrary winds rage, now hurrying on one side, now impetuously meeting, nor is the storm that follows less terrific than that which afflicts her brain. What is now the condition of her soul, that queen of human sensation? Why does it remain in the body, which has become a subject of tears and laughter? Is it clear, or confused, like the body in which it continues to live? Will it not, or can it not, again take

command of the rebellious organs? Why, more sublime than the clay to which it is united, is it subject to all its changes? Science has not succeeded, and perhaps never will, in revealing such mysteries; but pity has long sighed over this abasement of our unhappy race. Meanwhile, how beautiful is Yole wandering in the silence of night, like the moon in the heavens, guided by which the pilgrim avoids the dangers of the road, and reaches his family in safety, and stops upon his threshold to bless the benign ray. Although she traverses various paths, she directs her course to one determinate end; sometimes she encounters some object, which presents itself as an insuperable obstacle, and immediately takes another path; had she found them all impassable, she would perhaps have died. Thus wandering, she arrives at the place where, on the preceding night, her mother had found her; she stopped, knelt, looked around to see if she were observed, then wept softly; then she heaped up a little mound of earth, drew from her breast a cross of precious stones, and planted it there. Oh the prayer of the unfortunate girl, which she sighed forth with clasped hands, was fervid and worthy to be heard! At last she arose, and seemed as if about to return to the castle. Queen Elena ran to her, with sorrow such as any mother who looks upon these pages may imagine, for these griefs may be felt, not told.

"You are come at last," said Queen Elena, seeing Yole approach the door of the hall, "you are come at last, my dear daughter;" and, running to meet her, kissed her. "Where have you been? I have called you so long, and you did not reply."

"He is dead."

"Who?"

"He."

"What is his name?"

Yole did not reply.

"Ah, my daughter! When will you cease to distress the heart of your poor mother? What have I done that you should reward me thus? Have I not borne you on my bosom? Have I not nourished you from my breast,

and soothed the tears of your infancy? Disclose to me all your grief, I will do anything for you, anything rather than see you unhappy; where can you hope for more pity than from your mother?"

Yole was silent.

"You wish to kill me, I see, ungrateful girl! You did not give promise of such cruelty,—no, you did not give promise of that. Once you were gentle, kind and compassionate,—now how changed! The rest of the few days God grants to me, will be consumed in agony; you take them from me, . . . you; . . . but no, I will never curse the hour of your birth."

"I have cursed it."

"You have cursed it! Then all hope is departed! I will never show my face again; pardon the involuntary fault which I committed, in giving you life, as I pardon you the voluntary one of cursing it. Hidden in my chamber from every human eye, I will kill myself with hunger. From you I wish neither tears nor prayers; nor should you give them to me, for you hate that bond of love which nature has established between mother and child;—but by the agonies that you have made me endure, by past griefs, by present ones,—when I am dead, oh! I conjure you, Yole, do not come to reproach my dust for giving you life,—let me sleep in peace,—bone of my bone, do not persecute me in the bosom of Eternity!"

Queen Elena turned to depart. Yole, agitated by fierce emotions, drew herself up to her full height, extending her clenched hands, and rolling up her bloodshot eyes, till the whites only were visible. She would have recalled her mother, but the words could not escape from her swelling throat; her only utterance was a sob of anguish. The queen, not hearing the sound, went on; Yole, despairing of calling her back by her voice, endeavored to do so by a gesture; but even had she been able to extend her arms, she could not have moved a finger to beckon her back, so tightly had the agitation which convulsed her compressed her nails upon the palms of her hands. Again she essayed to speak;—vain effort! her tongue refused its office;—she could utter only broken

and inarticulate sounds; the tension of her nerves relaxed, her eyelids drooped. Gismonda received her in her arms

Rogiero, having followed for some distance the steps of his faithful guide, arrived at the house. For, as Homer relates of the vessels of Achilles and Ajax, the cottages of Drengotto and Ghino were very far from each other, being situated as a mark of the trust reposed in them by their lords, at the very extremities of the banditti's settlement. Indeed, they scorned danger more than all their companions: the first, through his indifference to good or evil, the principal characteristic of his disposition; the second, because of a certain tranquil security, that generally accompanies minds truly great. They entered. Ghino, after he had rekindled the fire, approached Rogiero, to help him remove his armor. He at first modestly refused, but the courteous host insisting, he finally consented. Ghino, as he unbuttoned one part after another, examined each attentively, praising one and finding fault with another, manifesting much acquaintance with arms, and a thorough knowledge of the subject. Rogiero, looking round the hut, saw a very long lance, the extreme length of which preventing its being placed erect against the wall, it rested diagonally between two corners. Wondering greatly at its size, and desirous of knowing something about it, he asked,

"Courteous host, pray is that the spear of King Arthur which you keep in the corner?"

"A man once lived in Italy who wielded it in his youth, as a shepherd wields his crook; he conquered with it at more than one tournament, and overthrew more than one knight in battle. This is all that remains to me of the inheritance of my ancestors,—it is my father's lance. I also once brandished it,—now it has become too heavy for my failing arm."

"God help us! Failing! It seems to me that you cannot be over forty."

"Is it age alone that makes us weak?"

"No, truly. But pray why does that little white flag cover the point?"

"Because it preserves from fading a spot of blood that many years ago was incrustated upon it."

Just then a distant bell was heard sounding the Ave Maria for the prayers which Catholics recite at evening for the souls of their dead. Ghino listened earnestly to the strokes, as if they announced some disaster to him, then said to Rogiero,

"Young knight, I ask your pardon if for one moment I leave you alone, for I must recite my prayers."

"What! Have you anything to ask or to thank Heaven for?"

"I ask nothing for myself; whatever fate is sent me, good or bad, I bow in resignation; but I pray for the peace of the dead."

"And do you believe they are benefited by the prayers of the living?"

"I do, and if not, it would serve to recall them to mind. You would wish to remember, at least once a day, a father killed by treachery."

"You speak truly. I will pray with you, although prayers are unnecessary to recall my father's death to me."

"Your father then is also dead?"

"And killed with greater tortures than the most cruel mind can imagine."

"*De profundis clamavi*," said Ghino, kneeling before an image, where he prayed fervently for a long time, keeping his face hidden in his hands. When he arose, his eyes were full of tears, but the emotion that had forced them there was past. Suddenly, as if the prayer had been a parenthesis, resuming the conversation, he asked Rogiero:

"Have you avenged him?"

"No."

"I am sorry for it."

"Another year, should we be permitted to meet again, I hope I may reply differently to you."

"Amen, Sir Knight."

Although our heroes were not so hungry as those of Homer,* whom it was necessary to provide with supper thrice in one evening, provision must nevertheless be made to meet the demands of appetite. Ghino set the table, gave Rogiero some water to wash his hands, and after washing his own, seated himself opposite. The dishes were neither many nor rare. A crane which had been roasted in the morning was enough to satisfy both. If the food does not please our readers, let them find fault with the times of which we treat. The world, since then, has changed in all things, both small and great: falcons, hawks, sparrows, and similar game were highly prized, and furnished the tables of the great. Nowadays they would be spurned by the poorest beggar that ever implored alms for the love of God. But it is worthy of remark that all ages agree in the pleasure of drinking wine, which redounds more to the credit of the wine than to that of men, who have always loved, from fools, to become drunkards, and *vice versâ per omnia sæcula sæculorum*.

While seated at table, an idea so perplexed Rogiero, that he sat abstracted, forgetting to eat. Ghino, after looking at him for some time, broke the silence by saying:

"Sir Knight, if my question is not impertinent, will you tell me of what you are thinking so earnestly?"

"Messer Ghino," said Rogiero, hesitating, "I would willingly comply with your request did I not fear to seem indiscreet."

"Do not hesitate on that account. Speak freely, for you can ask me nothing that I shall not be pleased to answer."

"I was thinking how a courteous baron, such as you seem to be, can take pleasure in a profession that all agree in calling infamous, for I do not believe that you were born to it."

"You have guessed rightly, I was not born to it; nor do I differ from those who call it infamous, although I am

* Ulysses and Diomedes.—*Iliad*, 9, 10.

convinced that should you say to them: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone,' not one of them would be so imprudent as to dare to do it. I hate the banditti by whom I am surrounded, but I find myself necessarily united with them. Fortune gave me wealth and an illustrious name: my wealth is changed to poverty, and my name to reproach. You may look upon me as a plaything of fortune, or rather a wreck left by the storm of persecution, for I am Ghino di Tacco dei Grandi di Siena." *

"You Ghino di Tacco, the famous bandit!" exclaimed Rogiero, rising.

"Ghino di Tacco Monaceschi dei Pecorai da Torrita," replied Ghino, unmoved. "You may have heard strange tales of me, for I know that the crazy rabble paint me as a giant of terrible aspect, and with a heart void of pity. I know that women use my name to frighten children, and to keep them still, as if I were an ogre or a goblin, for 'tis an old saying that when men persecute their fellow-men, they are not contented with making them merely unhappy, but wish to render them infamous also; this, however, is but a slight matter. Do you think me one to care for blame or praise?"

"I have often heard you spoken of as a knight well skilled in arms, and more than one person has expressed regret in my presence that you should be driven to a calling which you certainly do not love."

"Thanks to those wise ones. In the state of warfare against society in which I find myself, I endeavor to follow to the utmost the rule of doing as little evil as possible. If, on the road, I meet some poor, good man, I help him; if a scholar, I give him money wherewith to buy books, and entreat him to apply himself usefully, for I love my country; but the rich priest, the proud noble, must pay a ransom. They have taken all from me; some of them must support me. They try to kill me, and they do their duty. I do not kill, but I draw money from

* Ghino di Tacco is no fabulous creation, but a strictly historical personage. See appendix.

them, and thus do mine. If they wish for peace, I will be the first to lay down my arms. And if it is true that the riches of the few make the misery of the many, I aid society, even when I wage war upon it."

"Truly, Siena lost much when you abandoned her."

"I did not abandon her, Sir Knight; I was expelled from her."

"Then there is no hope that you can ever return as a true and loyal citizen?"

"None whatever. The offence is too great for pardon. Would you like to hear the story of my adventures? It is not long, although as terrible as any that have ever happened in the world."

"I should esteem it as the greatest courtesy."

"Upon the banks of the Arbia, where Farinata degli Uberti, the brave knight, conquered his enemies, and separated their cause from that of their country (for them he wished dead, but his country powerful), rose the humble towers of my castle of Torrita. Not far from them were situated the rich estate and proud castles of the Counts of Santa Fiora. Haughty men! elated with wealth, they deemed that honor could not dwell in those of poor estate, and exercised all their power to do evil, for this they esteemed lordly; to be courteous and kind, weak.

"Tacco, my father, who wielded that lance, and whom all considered an honorable knight, although of much less wealth than the Counts of Santa Fiora, labored earnestly in helping the poor of the neighborhood, in redressing wrongs, and in restoring peace to those from whom it had departed. When he passed through the village, the cry ran from mouth to mouth: '*Haste, and see the knight!*' and forthwith appeared a crowd of women at the windows, men on the balconies of their shops, with heads uncovered, and children crowding round him to kiss his hand. He, far from being annoyed, was pleased with this demonstration, and some of the children he patted lightly on the cheek, and on others laid his terrible hand, like the paw of a lion protecting its offspring. Often he wept with tenderness; oftener he exclaimed:

‘Lordly squires, why seek to remove these people from me? Do you take it ill that they love me?’ Sometimes, at sunset, dressed in a coat of skins, and mounted on a sorry nag, he went along the road, and begged each one that he met, in the name of his master, Tacco da Torrita, to accept lodging for that night at the castle. Then he delighted to reveal himself as the lord, and if the guest were poor, he supplied his wants, and sent him away contented.

“It often happened that the Counts of Santa Fiora held a great court, and caused it to be published abroad.—Irreparable dishonor! their tables were deserted, while the same day guests were not wanting at Torrita; for you must know, Sir Knight, that in giving, an indescribable tact is required, which cannot be taught, but comes from nature, like beauty of person. Giving to another, argues yourself more powerful than he,”—and here Ghino, raising his finger, commanded all Rogiero’s attention,—“and men are not wont to pardon any kind of superiority; a gift is very often the result of pride in the giver, and is based upon the inferiority of the receiver. Hence you must not wonder if you often hear ingratitude spoken of unjustly, for the present of the rich is a humiliation to the poor rather than a benefit, because the rich man thinks that on account of his wealth he can buy the poor, both body and soul. That charm, that affability of manner, which, because it costs no effort, we do not perceive or do not remember, but which convinces at once the one accepting that he does honor to him who gives, and by refusing would offend him, so that through a sense of politeness he is forced to accept the courtesy, are things, Sir Knight, to admire, but not to be taught. These were the civil virtues of my father. The military,—you have mistaken his lance for that of the fabulous husband of Queen Guinever; it will be enough to say, that once, jousting in the tournament commonly held in Siena at Christmas, he won twenty suits of armor and as many horses, which he not only restored to the knights, without ransom, but carried them with him to Torrita, where he kept them several

days, magnificently entertained, and sent them back to their castles captivated by his nobleness.

"The Counts of Santa Fiora not excelling in these knightly exercises, used all their influence with the mayoralty of Siena to have them abolished ; but always in vain ; for the Sieneſe are ſkilful in the uſe of arms, and are great lovers of theſe combats. In the corrupt age in which we live, emulation produces hate rather than virtue, nor did my father, kind to all others, ſhow much courtesy towards the Counts of Santa Fiora, for every time he found himſelf in arms with them, he always placed himſelf on the oppoſite ſide, and gave them ſuch blows that he often ſent them back wounded to their caſtles. Often from the ſlighteſt cauſes the moſt ſavage encounters aroſe : the hatred of the knights extended itſelf to their vassals ; who, often meeting each other in the fields, came firſt to threatening words, then to blows and death. The barons deemed it neceſſary for their own honors to protect their own followers, and thus open war broke out in the boſom of a country that boated liberty of the ſtate, and a republican government. My father, although much inferior in wealth and in the number of his retainers, fought ſo valiantly, that the counts, thinking open force uſeleſs, had recourſe to treachery.

"I remember nothing, being then only about four years old, of the dreadful night when the treacherous vassals on guard at the gate of the caſtle gave entrance to the Counts of Santa Fiora's men ; I have only a confused recollection of diſhevelled damsels running hither and thither, as if beſet by evil ſpirits, and of a lady, very, very pale, who took me in her arms, and carried me through many dark paths, to a man completely armed, who embraced us both. My poor mother ! Think with what feeling ſo noble a lady fled, barefoot and half-clad, with her ſon clinging to her neck, from the pillaged home of her noble huſband, uncertain of his fate ; for at the ſudden alarm he had haſtened to arm himſelf for their defence ! A thouſand times have my old vassals related to me the incredible feats which my father performed during that night, which put to ſhame the fabulous deeds

of the Knights of the Round Table ; but his enemies were too numerous ; overpowered by numbers, he still fought, until he knew that his wife, his children, and his most faithful vassals had reached a place of safety. He was the armed knight who had received us in the country, and whom I, although accustomed to see him every day, did not recognize, such a change had his efforts both of body and mind wrought in his appearance. They have also told me, that, although he had received no mortal wound, the cuts and stabs were so many, that for a long time afterward he could not put on his armor. Here a break occurs in my memory, and I can only recall having been carried to a castle by the lady who saved me, where was a beautiful woman dressed in black, and a priest whom I recognized as the chaplain of the castle ; they welcomed us courteously, and after my mother had conversed with them apart, they wept more violently than I believed any one could weep for another's misfortune. My mother led me every evening to a dark place, where a single lamp burned before the image of the Redeemer, and here we prayed, together with the lady of the castle and the chaplain ; then she carried me to bed, and before I went to sleep, related to me many valiant achievements performed by ancient knights. One evening I missed her ; the next also. I inquired of her from the lady, but she made me no reply. Without knowing why, I began to weep : the chaplain dried his eyes behind the chair of the lady, who appeared more moved by my tears than by the death of her unfortunate sister.

“ ‘ Whose long stick is this ? ’ I asked the lady one day, seeing that lance suspended in the castle hall. ‘ It is your father’s lance. ’ ‘ And that bloody garment ? ’ ‘ It is your father’s. ’ ‘ Why does he never come to see me ? Am I disagreeable to him ? ’ ‘ You are an orphan ; he loved you more than his life, but his enemies have killed him. ’ ‘ *Oh Dio !* where are those traitors ? What are their names, lady ? ’ ‘ Son of the betrayed, you shall know, when you can avenge them. ’ ‘ When will that be, dear lady ? ’ ‘ When you can wield that spear, as you now do the rod which you hold in your hand. ’ See how

ideas of vengeance and death entered my mind before I knew how man can injure his fellow-man.

“From that moment the only idea I cherished was that of becoming strong enough to wield the lance. The dawn found me in the woods, the setting sun left me there. In short, I became ‘a mighty hunter.’ When, breathless with exultation, I reached the castle, bearing upon my shoulders a boar, killed by my spear, the lady would run with joyful face to meet and kiss me. If unsuccessful, I followed by-paths, and hid myself in the most retired part of the castle, raging with anger. Often at night, when all around was still, I went as stealthily as a robber to the place where the lance stood, and taking it by one end, tried to raise it; prodigious were my exertions; I placed my hands in every position, pressed and shook it, but all in vain, for its immovable weight seemed to scorn my weakness; till at length, disturbed from its equilibrium, it would fall with a loud noise, and I would make my escape through the darkness, half ashamed to be detected in the attempt. In the morning, it would be standing in the old position, as if to challenge me again.

“The time came at last, when with strained muscles and clenched teeth I raised it in both hands and held it fast. ‘You have lifted it!’ cried the lady’s voice behind me. ‘Orphan, in a year and a day you shall know what is required of you.’ A splendid feast was prepared, the banners waved on the castle walls, and the trumpets resounded from morning till evening, to celebrate the festival of the raising of the lance. The days passed, the months went by, the year was completed. At midnight a knock came at my chamber door, and a voice cried: ‘Why sleeps the son of the betrayed? The hour of knowledge has come.’ The lady of the castle took me by the hand, she trembled like a leaf, and led me to the chapel; upon the altar lay an open book and the bloody garment; the lance was in my right hand. ‘This garment your father wore on the day of his death; the blood with which it is dyed is your father’s, drawn from his veins by the treachery of his enemies; swear, son of the betrayed, upon the Holy Gospel, that you will

avenge him.' I leaned the spear against the altar, and striking both hands upon the book, cried: 'I swear it.' The lady threw herself upon my neck, wept, laughed, and kissed me passionately. 'Bold heart, true son of my murdered brother, learn who you are.' She then narrated what you already know, and added: 'The lady who brought you that evening to the chapel was your mother; she lived with me, as the wife of the outlaw upon whose head a price is set only can live. One night, a vassal, dressed in mourning, came to my castle, and asked to see me. "What news, vassal," I demanded, as soon as I entered the hall. "My lady, I bring you the words of your brother, but they are his last words." "Tell them." "Before his head fell beneath the axe, Monseigneur Tacco called me to him and said, "When I am dead, take my shirt, and stain it deeply in my blood; take also my lance, and go with them both to Radicofani, to my sister, the Lady Gualdrada,—understand clearly,—my sister,—the news would kill my wife,—and say to her, My lady, this is the inheritance which your brother sends to his son Ghino, and he begs you, if you ever loved him in life, and desire the peace of his soul in death, that you never let his son know of his misfortunes, until he is old enough to wield this lance; then reveal his race, and make him swear upon the Gospel to avenge me.' Of his wife he does not speak; this hope has made the hour of his murder less bitter.'" The news could not be concealed from your mother; she came to me to learn the truth; I neither denied nor confirmed it; she fell senseless, and—now lies—buried—here—beneath your feet. After your father had been banished from the country of Siena, he had turned bandit; chained in his sleep he fell into the hands of the Philistines. His words moved the citizens, and he might have been saved; but Benincasa of Arezzo, judge of the criminal court of Siena, sold his life, and the Counts of Santa Fiora paid the price of blood. He died upon the scaffold, I tell you—upon the scaffold. Let your hatred rest upon the counts—if in your soul there is anything worse than hatred, let it fall on Benincasa:—they were old enemies, he, a

trembling coward who bartered the life of an innocent man for ducats ; now he holds the office of Senator at Rome. Fortune offers you a splendid place for revenge. From this moment you can no longer dwell in my castle : one hour has already passed since midnight, the heavens rage furiously, but arm yourself and go. The only signal at which the drawbridge of Radicofani shall fall, is the head of Benincasa."

"The tempest roared, I heard it not ; in company with my thoughts, I rode through my usurped territories. I showed the bloody shirt, I showed the son of the good knight, shaking his father's lance, and all the vassals proffered me aid. I chose four hundred, and with a speed almost equal to my impatience, we reached Rome,—Rome, the great skeleton. We arrived at the base of the Capitol. I seemed to hear the Roman spectres groan from amidst those magnificent ruins. For one moment I forgot my revenge, but for one moment only. I left my companions, and ascended the staircase alone. A man of low stature, of cadaverous complexion, thin, with wrinkled cheeks and forehead, was turning the pages of a heavy volume with a palsied hand ; at first sight of him, I felt that shudder which one feels at something loathsome, and from which one recoils for fear of contamination : this loathing I have ever since felt when I meet men wearing the *toga* : indeed they are the scum of human vice ; sellers of words without sense ; mercenary as the soul of Judas, they base their power upon the quarrels of man against man, often of brother against brother, or of father against son. Impudent beyond compare, they uncover with profane hands the stains of our race, they excite a mad thirst for riches, and they sow, as Cadmus the dragon's teeth, the maxim, that there is no refined feeling in the world that is worth a piece of coined gold ; puffed up with vain knowledge, like a man drunk with wine, deformed from the wearisome business of bending over books, and thus confusing the intellect that nature has given them ; three errors, written by ignorant people before them, they can transform into one truth ; he whose memory is best stocked with these errors has the best

reputation. Oh ! that they all had but one head ! I approached the seat of the vile man ; he raised his head, half closing his eyes, weakened by reading, to see me better. 'Who are you ? What do you want ?' he asked in a shrill voice. 'Be quick, for I have much to do this morning.' 'Great Senator,' I replied, drawing nearer to his seat, 'mine is a small affair, and may be settled in a moment !' 'Do not come any nearer ; it is forbidden to come too near the Senator.' I took no notice, but still advancing, continued : 'You owe me a debt.' 'A debt ? You are mad. Take this madman away, drive him out, put him in prison !' 'You are the madman, to believe yourself safe, when you have betrayed the innocent ; you owe me my father's life.' By this time, I had placed myself behind him, and seized him by the throat with such fury that his eyes seemed starting from his head, and his lips hesitatingly murmured : '*Salvum fac spiritum meum ;*'—but I whispered in his ear : 'Perdition ! Perdition !' I then drew my knife, and following the blue impress of my fingers, cut off his head, grasping it by the hair with the joy of a lover pressing the hand of his beloved. Meanwhile a crowd had collected. Undismayed, I turned, extending my arm, showing my clenched hand, and the bloody knife, and cried to them : 'Christians, I make a vow to God, that whoever opposes my path shall receive this knife in his heart.' It would seem that my bearing corresponded to my words, for they drew back on all sides, murmuring like the sea when the wind is at rest. My vassals received me with loud cries of joy ; I fastened the head of Benincasa to my father's lance, and giving orders that the trumpets should sound joyfully, left Rome, passing through an immense concourse of people awe-struck by so bold an exploit. 'Guard ! Guard ! Lower the drawbridge !' 'Who wishes to enter at such an hour ?' 'Lower the drawbridge, for I am Ghino.' 'My lord, you know her ladyship's command : have you the token ?' 'Knave, do you think that I would dare to appear before her without it ?' I passed the bridge, I flew to the chamber of Lady Gualdrada ;—she was not there. I ran to the chapel, and ere I reached it, her

voice, chanting the psalms, announced her presence there : I entered by a little door beside the altar, and saw her kneeling by the chancel, absorbed in her devotions ; a single candle shed its faint rays upon her, beside which lay a rosary. At the grating of the door upon its hinges, and at the noise of my footsteps, she raised her eyes, but could perceive nothing in the darkness. I advanced slowly, without uttering a word, extending the hand which held the head of Benincasa ; gradually, as I approached the light, she perceived an indistinct object,—the head of a man suspended in the air. ‘The face of Benincasa!’ I exclaimed. ‘The signal was given, the bridge was lowered.’—‘It was well done,’ replied the lady ; and quietly closing her book, she took the candle, and holding it before my eyes, looked at me fixedly. Ascertaining that I was indeed her nephew, her face became alternately flushed and pallid. Grasping at the balustrade for support, her strength failed, and she fell senseless into my arms. Since that time every one has declared war against me, and I am happily able to defend myself from all. The excellent lady died, and appointed me her heir. She held Radicofani as feudatory from the church ; I hold it from no one, and acknowledge neither vassalage nor homage :—let them come and expel me, if they wish. More than once have the Counts of Santa Fiora had their heads broken, their castles burned, their farms destroyed. At last, leaving the country, they betook themselves to Siena, where fear of me holds them imprisoned. Should they dare to pass its bounds, the penalty is—death. I need not relate to you all my deeds ; you can imagine what must be those of a poor bandit ; but if they are not illustrious, neither are they cruel. Good is forbidden, glory refused me ; all that I can hope for, is to be less hated. Now a desire has seized me to approach the kingdom of Sicily, for, I love Manfred ; and although he does not know it, in me he has a friend who will sustain him while life lasts.”

“Holy Mary ! Do you love Manfred ?”

“Why should I not love him ? Are not his deeds such that envy itself could not find fault with them ?”

"How little you know him ! He is the worst man the sun shines upon ; the murderer of his brother, and my mortal enemy."

Then Rogiero related all that had happened, and what he intended to do, and then added : "What do you think of him ? Is this a man to be loved ?"

"You do well to hate him, if these things are true. I, an Italian, see in Manfred a bold and wise compatriot, who loves Italy, and wishes to make her great ; hence I cannot, I ought not to hate him ; even were he not so, but an avaricious and rapacious foreigner, I should indeed like to assist in his expulsion by our own arms, but not by the aid of foreign ones ; the fable is a very old one, of the dog, that, covered with wasps, remained quiet without even winking, saying to those who questioned him, that they were now satiated with blood, and no longer gave him any trouble, but that if he should shake them off, other thirsty ones would take their place, to suck what they had left."

"Should I then renounce my revenge, because his interests are united to those of Italy ? No, let him die ; we will provide for the arms of the foreigner."

"To get rid of the foreigners is not so easy as to invite them ; and with most uncertain hope, you bring most certain ruin upon your country."

"How then should I appease my father's spirit ? What would you have done ?"

"Sir Knight, I do not wish to call myself either a very good, or a very bad man ; I do not know what I should have done in your case. I thank fortune, that in avenging myself I have injured but few."

"Your reply is like pushing back the shipwrecked sailor who is on the point of reaching the shore."

"But," replied Ghino, hiding his face, "I could give you my life, though not my counsel."

"You hate me ?"

"I pity you. In any case, remember that I gladly owe you my life."

They then arose and went to bed. In the morning, Rogiero, taking leave of his host, who with regret witnessed his departure, pursued his way.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRAITOR'S END.

Jamque rubescebat stellis Aurora fugatis :
 Quum procul obscuros colles humilemque videmus
 Italiam. Italiam primus conclamat Achates ;
 Italiam læto socii clamore salutant.

ÆNEID, Lib. 3.

Now paled the stars before the rosy dawn ;
 Dimly appeared the mountains far withdrawn ;
 Then soon the Italian shores Achates spied ;
 And, Italy ! each joyful sailor cried.

M. G. M.



BEHOLD the Alps ! How many ages crown their summits ! Time wraps them in his mysteries. Of those which are known some appear as brilliant as the gems in a royal diadem ; others glooming with a blood-red tint, like the last expiring ray of the setting sun ; others shadowy with a terrible darkness. From those rocks, blasted by the lightning, the Roman eagle beheld the nations of the earth, and spreading its wings for the destined course, heralded with terror from province to province, from land to land, the victory of the immortal legions. The lofty destiny of Hannibal taught it the sad knowledge that it could be conquered ; still, so long as the virtues of the nation formed its nest, it remained, together with the Alps, the terror of the nations. When consumed by years and by vice the empire of the Cæsars fell beneath the weight of its own greatness, the proud eagle abandoned that corpse of glory, leaving the hordes of northern crows to batten on the dead remains. Charlemagne came, but the eagle had fled, the nest was cold, and he scattered it to the winds. The spirit of a proud captain wanders raging over those fearful precipices. Miscreant ! To him the fates of the world had granted the power to raise again the ancient virtue of Rome, to show that the heroes of

antiquity could be now not merely imitated but surpassed in Italy; the eagle rested upon his hand as securely as upon the sceptre of Cæsar; who would have prevented him, or could, even if they had wished to? Did he not conquer at once men and fate. And surely Italian were the voices that taught him the first words of love, Italian was the air that he first breathed, Italian the sun that warmed his infant limbs! yet he did it not. Perhaps in an unhappy life he has paid the penalty of this fault, but it is an insufficient expiation. When our history shall sound to future ages like the murmur of a distant waterfall, and our undertakings like the traces of an extinct volcano, and our language an object of wearisome research to the learned, surely his name will still remain great, like the summit of the St. Bernard which he traversed, which, rising immense, is lost in the obscurity of the clouds on the horizon; but the memory of this error or crime will live eternally in connection with his name, for it is not such as can be forgotten by time or blotted out by repentance. Now his virtues, his vices, his bones sleep in the tomb.* Let us not lay our hand too heavily upon the great one who lies dead; but we cannot turn our thoughts from him without sighing. "Alas! thou mightst have been a god, and hast preferred being a scourge.—Who can rule by the sword after thee?"

What did Nature intend, when she surrounded us with the horrors of the snows, the ruin of the avalanche, the fury of the hurricane, the awfulness of the solitude, the precipices, the torrents of the Alps? Did she think they were a sufficient defence against the fury of men? Were it not better to instil into their hearts a thought of peace? Would the perversity of the "dust of earth" have overcome the foresight of Nature? These snows, these precipices, were conquered by those who, abandoning without a care their wives and relatives, precipitated themselves over our provinces, raging like streams of fiery lava. Here they oppressed; here they snatched the prey with

* Didymi Clerici prophetæ minimi vitia, virtutes, ossa, hic tandem conquiescere cœpere.—*Epitaph of Ugo Foscolo.*

blood-stained hand ; here they fell ; now the rain washes, the wind moves, their unburied, dishonored, unwept bones. Miserable dupes, who rejoicingly rallied round the standard of the fierce one who enticed you with glory, because scorn would have driven you from him, come and see in what your glory consists ! Shameful slaves of a single man, betrayed in life and derided in death, you fell victims before the idol of the sword whom you worshipped. They oppressed us, while here "they ate the bread of wickedness and drank the wine of violence ;" now they are dead, let us curse them, . . . no, . . . old injuries have been avenged.* Is not the mocking laugh on the lips of the conqueror a bitter torment ? Our fathers made others endure it long, we feel it now ; time advances, the implacable and just redresser of wrongs. Long did we remain wicked ; had we continued strong we should be so still ; but courage and strength failed us, others have prevailed. What avails lamentation ? For Heaven's sake, let us not murmur at any one but at ourselves, who, first to offend, slept secure on the couch of injury. The offence, however, slumbered not, but passed the night in watching for vengeance, and sleep fled raging before the inexorable ones ; at our awakening, chains clanked on all our limbs. Shame to the imprudent one, who in the hour of danger rested in careless ease. What avails it to show thy rent garment ? All mock, none aid thee. Even oppression has its greatness ; dignity remains with the conquered, as fear with the conqueror. Raise thy head ; advance fearlessly ; thus, even if thou livest without honor, thou shalt at least die without disgrace, and so shall the Eternal in the mysteries of ages weave for thy distant descendants a new mantle of glory.

Upon the side of the Alps which slopes towards France, a body of men, desirous of reaching the summit, were laboriously ascending. As the broken and precipitous paths, the danger of the passes, the narrowness of some places, did not allow any order to be kept, the army of Charles advanced in detached groups of

* By the Sicilian Vespers.

twenty or more, each anxious to secure their own safety, rather than that of the mass. Guy de Montfort, the general-in-chief, Robert, Count of Flanders, the Count of Vendamme, Pierre de Bilmont, the Constable Giles Lebrun, Mirapoix, the Commissary General, Guillaume L'Etendard, and other captains, abandoning their colors, surrounded the litter of the Countess Beatrice, borne by two hardy mountaineers, who, from time to time, exhausted by fatigue, resigned it to others, who immediately replaced them. The air blew bitter cold; the rocky path was broken; the labor of every step was shown by the perspiration which fatigue distilled upon their brows; often they stopped looking upwards to see when they should reach the summit; but the mountain concealed its proud head among the gray clouds which rested upon it as upon a glorious throne, seeming to boast itself impassable to mortal foot, and to laugh at mortal weakness. Once they gave a shout, but the noise sounded so wild among those rugged precipices, it echoed so frightfully from those unknown, terrible places, that they dared not repeat it; the birds of prey flew screaming from their nests, the wolves assembled in packs, and seeing the multitude more numerous and more ferocious even than themselves, they hid quickly among the bushes of the gloomy valley. They climbed over rocks, they crossed torrents, they removed snow, trees, stones and whatever else obstructed their path, with rare courage and perseverance; still, from time to time, a man might be seen, exhausted and laboring for breath, throwing himself despairing on the ground, and allowing his companions to pass him, and to proceed as far as his eyes could follow them; but when he lost sight of them in some turn of the mountain path, when his ear no longer heard the voice of living men, and his looks wandered terror-struck over those solitudes, he would spring trembling to his feet, and hasten, as best he might, to rejoin them: in another place might be seen a horse slipping on the brink of a precipice, and dragging down with him the soldier, who, carefully examining the road, is leading him with the bridle twisted around his arm; not know-

ing how to save himself he grasps his neighbor, who in turn seizes another, and he another still ; thus, all together fall in a body down the abyss ; a sharp scream is heard, followed by a deathlike silence, for the place where they lie mangled is beyond the reach of mortal ear. More recently and with far greater danger, soldiers of iron, protected by the genius of a brave captain, crossed the St. Bernard and Spluga. In vain did the artillery and the incumbrances that modern warfare demand, impede their march ; in vain the hurricane of the Alps, the avalanches, the fury of the unchained elements. They conquered, and left an example of an undertaking, that, as long as man is clothed in flesh, can never be surpassed ; wherefore the good historian * said, " that it was performed by giants, rather than by men."

But if storms and artillery did not delay the army of the Count of Provence, he encountered the same dangerous snows, the slippery paths, the rocks, the precipices, the cliffs. In both armies, more than one soldier, grasping his comrade tightly, felt the fearful pleasure of gazing down at the horrors of the abyss, and so great was the awe which filled his spirit, that drawing back hastily, he made the sign of the cross, muttering a prayer. In both armies more than one, looking back towards his home, thought of his beloved children with a sigh, cursing the ambition of the man who led a nation from one land to die in another. They go on sad and silent, looking anxiously around to avoid in time any evil that might happen to them. Their thoughts are fierce and cruel, as nature prompts, when man is forced by all-powerful necessity to think of himself alone. Now, as they advance, they reach a spot where the mountain, rising perpendicularly, offers no access except to wings ; the foremost, pressed on by those behind, are crushed confusedly against it ; urged on in vain, they impart from band to band, even to the most distant, that involuntary immobility.

" Were there no graves in France that they have brought us away to die on these barren mountains ? Where is Count

* Botta, History of Italy, chap. 20.

de Montfort ? Let the count come and lead us back to our homes," cried the exasperated people. "Let us return then," cried the count angrily ; "since it is your pleasure, let us return ; we have been three days upon the road, and are already near the end, where our friends of Monferrato have prepared resting-places and food to refresh us. The provisions which we have left will hardly last one day longer ; we shall die on the way of hunger and cold ; but what matter ? let us return. Perhaps even now, amidst the applause of Rome ; Monseigneur Charles, the most holy pope, the Italians, are watching for us ; but let their hope in us be betrayed, let our cowardice be apparent to the whole people. Our ancestors, led by Charlemagne, crossed these very Alps, though fortified by men, and defended by the entire nation ; happy was he, for destiny called him to lead the brave ! Let us their degenerate children fly from them, although no one disputes with us their passage. Let us return to France, to our brothers, who, with unparalleled constancy, overcame such great dangers in Palestine, and won a prize of splendid glory ; let us return and restore the colors given to us by our ladies, and honored by such illustrious undertakings. I shall never go back there, for I should fear lest every one who met me in the street, should point me out to his companion, and say, 'Behold the brave man who was unable to cross the mountain !' Let us thus imitate our brave sovereign, who, with twenty galleys, set sail with the chance of encountering the eighty of the heretic Manfred ; thus let us keep our faith with him. Truly, this is the way which leads to immortality, this is the means whereby we shall merit the holy indulgence which the pope with so great liberality has granted us ; this is the performance of the vow you made in presence of his legates when you undertook the crusade. Think, you are now in presence of men and of God. Our names will be immortalized, for dishonor will take care to preserve them as monuments of shame. The golden lily is tarnished, honor is lost. I here break my sword, and swear on the faith of a knight never to bear arms again. Let us go to meet disgrace and de-

spair, since you reject glory and safety." This, and much beside, said the Count de Montfort, part of which was not listened to, and part lost in the howling of the wind and the noise of the multitude. They were on the point of turning back, when the Countess Beatrice, a high-spirited woman, rising on her litter, commanded her mountaineers to stand on some horses, and raise her as high as they could. By this means she succeeded in mounting the cliff, which was about twelve feet high, and there, as on a throne, she took the veil from her head and waved it in triumph. "Long live the Countess! Long live the Lady," cried the people, in a frenzy of delight. "Long live the Countess Beatrice!" and hastened with wonderful zeal to attempt to follow her. The stronger climbing on the shoulders of the weaker, and clinging with hands and feet, reached the top; many slipped, and unable to recover themselves, rolled down upon the heads of their companions, apparently exhausted; those who accomplished the feat offered their hands, belts, lances or anything they could to those behind them: and thus, after a weary hour, about two hundred succeeded in scaling the ascent, but it was with unimaginable noise, confusion and fury. Those who had placed themselves under one climber were in a few moments oppressed by a hundred, and sought in vain to free themselves from their uncomfortable position; infuriated by resistance, they began to deal blows, and finding those unavailing they had recourse to their swords; the nearest tried hard to draw back, and their blows and thrusts against those who were pushing them on were numerous; still, urged on by those who did not see what was the matter, they were again thrown forward, and those behind, advancing, fell in their turn upon the fallen: and thus they lay, in piles, on each other; many rose, bruised and wounded; many rose no more. Count Guy, seeing that this way of mounting the height produced more harm than good, shouted to them to stop, but in vain; therefore he commanded the knights who surrounded him to beat back the frenzied people with their swords. Thus by the death and wounding of a few,

they succeeded in obtaining some degree of quiet. Then, making them heap up rocks and earth against the face of the cliff, and animating them by voice and example, in four hours he had constructed a road over which, with some difficulty, passed the horses, knights, baggage-wagons, cars, and whatever else there was. When night came, the fear that had hitherto kept them apart now drew them together, and they remained quiet where they were. Although the position they then occupied was not dangerous, their imaginations were so filled with thoughts of precipices and ruins, that, in the darkness, they dared not stir hand or foot.

Morning dawned. No perfume of flowers, no song of birds, greeted it among those solitary rocks : but the peaks of the Alps, tinged with a brilliant orange, and standing out clear against the blue horizon, now perfectly free from clouds, were majestic and at the same time beautiful objects. With the eagerness of those about to attain a desired end, the French set forward : at first they moved slowly, as if benumbed by cold, but motion gradually inducing warmth, they were able to advance more rapidly. Inspiring was the sight of that hurrying, bustling multitude, the glittering of the helmets, spears and armor of the knights, the pennants streaming in the wind, the costly dresses ; more inspiring was the clash of the trumpets resounding from time to time, the spirited war-songs, the cries of joy : it seemed an assemblage of knights met to celebrate some solemn day ; a festival easier to imagine than to describe. They reach the summit : their eyes, sparkling with the eager hope of acquisition, glance over the country spread out beneath them, and as far as sight extends, to the distant horizon. Truth to tell, only the eastern edge of Italy can be perceived from that point ; but so deeply were their minds impressed by the horrors through which they had passed, so brilliant were the hopes and fancies that glowed in their imaginations, excited by the accounts they had heard, that it seemed as if they were looking upon the terrestrial Paradise, which the Eternal prepared for sinless creatures. Then they raised their arms to heaven, crying : "Italy ! Italy !" This cry

was caught up through the ranks, and the most distant repeated, "Italy!" Now indeed there was a stir, a hastening; the voices of the captains were unheard, blows were unheeded: pushing, crushing, using hands and feet, they strove who should first reach it. Truly the descent seemed no less frightful than the ascent. But who that could enjoy the sight of beautiful things would wish to sadden himself by the contemplation of the mournful! They saw flowery fields, meadows blessed by Heaven; that was the end of the journey, of the path that led they knew not whither. There they hoped to find food and rest for present need: there lands, wealth, and whatever else could render life happy. Already they supposed themselves masters of it. They had conquered Nature, they gave no thought to men. Unhappy ones! There they would have found a tomb, if fate had committed the defence of it to men, . . . either more brave—or more united, . . . or less infamous.

As we are sure that no one will read these pages, whether they be good or bad, to learn geography, we advise our reader not to be astonished if we suddenly transport Rogiero from a forest of Terra di Lavoro to Mirandola, formerly a very strong castle of Romagna, a distance of several hundred miles. The reason of his going thither was, that from thence Parma could be easily and quickly reached, and the report was that the army of Charles was to take that route. Our hero, as he advanced, felt such an increasing repugnance to go further, that day by day he had travelled more slowly. That name of traitor often sounded in his ear like a cry of alarm; the words of Ghino still disturbed him deeply. He thought to himself:—"With the lofty purpose of overcoming dangers, both of earth and heaven, of avenging my father, and of recovering what has been taken from me by the blackest treachery, I have undertaken labors under which most men would have sunk. I thought to win greatness, and my hope is degenerated, not only into nothingness, but into dishonor!"—Oh, the anguish of a mind condemned to feel nobly, and to find in external objects only weakness or crime. Ghino, whose life he

had saved, and who, from his position in life, must necessarily be rather unscrupulous as regards precepts of honor, had pitied him : what would those have done who were under no obligations to him, and who professed to love their country, and to practise the precepts of honor ? An insupportable weight hung heavy on his heart. Thus, saddling his horse a hundred times, and as often putting him back into the stable, he passed two days at Mirandola. Shut up in his own room, with his head bowed upon his knees, he lamented his cruel fate ; and as whenever we are in trouble we all turn to God, he often implored Heaven to assist and guide him. In the second night of his stay, while tossing from side to side, he in vain endeavored to call sleep to his eyes, he heard a noise as of something moving softly through the room. He listened, thinking that he must be mistaken ; perceiving that it was no delusion of his imagination, he demanded in a clear voice, " Who is there ? " The reply came in a faint, almost inaudible tone, as if from a disembodied spirit, "*Remember your father.*"—"Who are you who know my secret ?" cried Rogiero, starting up in his bed. "Come, angel or demon, you will be welcome ; counsel me whether for perdition or salvation ; counsel me, for my soul cannot counsel itself."

No reply, no further noise. Rogiero fell back upon the bed, and the crowd of past events rose before his mind like a terrible vision ; and when, towards morning, sleep closed his weary eyes, his dreams were such as a man may have upon the pillow of revenge.

In the morning he arose, pale, miserable, with haggard eyes, and went down to pay the landlord. Just as he entered the room, a man, enveloped in a cloak, came in by the street door, whom the landlord immediately addressed, saying : "Good-day to you, Master Lippo ; you look as if you had been riding all night. What news do you bring from up there ?"

"The Ghibellines are leaving the environs of Parma without fighting, for the army of the count has taken another route ; they say that it is advancing by way of Milan, having for a guide that gallows-bird, Napoleone

della Torre, but here or there, thorns are sown on their road."

"Why, who is there who could resist him on the road to Milan? There are no Ghibellines in that part of the country?"

"There are both Bianchi and Neri,* my good Giacomo, for if all were alike the world would come to a standstill. There is the Marquis Pelavicino, who is an adherent of Manfred—he is in the neighborhood of Pavia; Buoso da Duera in that of Cremona, and Mastino della Scala in that of Verona. Truly you can judge whether they will let him pass without paying toll. So be it. What is there, Giacomo, by way of breakfast, for a poor Ghibelline?"

Rogiero, as anxious to go now as yesterday he had been to remain, paid the innkeeper, saddled his horse, and left Mirandola. On the way he learned that the French, instead of taking the most direct road, that from Asti to Parina, were advancing by way of Cremona; eager to reach them, he turned his horse in the direction of the Po. When he arrived at Lugara, though the sun was still high and the boat ready to cross the river, the same hesitation took possession of him as had detained him at Mirandola; the image of his father was faint, and that repugnance to undertake a thing so hateful to him, and that word, traitor, returned to disturb his soul. In the silence of the night, upon his solitary bed, he vainly sought relief from his uneasiness; he seemed to be groping along in some dark place, where the longer he wandered, the more he went astray. In the morning, when he awoke, he perceived a slip of paper in his right hand; wondering he went to the window, and in the faint light of dawn he read, "*Remember your father!*"

This reminder produced in his mind an effect like that of tearing the bandage from a half-healed wound. Passion overcame reason, and more fiercely than ever he resumed his former purpose. He crossed the Po, passed Casal Maggiore and Rovara, nor slackened his speed till he

* The Ghibellines were divided into two parties, called Blacks and Whites.

approached Cremona. He had nearly reached it, the end of his journey was at hand, and now he wished it more remote. He inquired of every one he met, and those who told him that the distance still to travel was short, he passed in silence, cursing them in his heart; those who affirmed that it was still far off, he pleasantly bade God-speed. Thus doubtful whether to go forward or to turn back, and still drawn on by fate, he found himself one day, just before vespers, between San Daniele and Cicognolo, towns not very far from Cremona. Absorbed in thought, he dropped the bridle on his horse's neck; suddenly, as he raised his head to look at the beautiful houses that were visible through the branches of the trees, he found himself surrounded by a troop of more than twenty horsemen, the leader of whom commanded Rogiero to follow him.

"Know," cried Rogiero, drawing his sword, for his spear was useless, the men being so near—"know that no one crosses my path, except by force and at the risk of his life."

"Sir Knight," replied the captain, "God forbid that we should use violence toward you; our master, Buoso da Duera, sent us to meet you, and to lead you to where he is. May it please you to follow us, for we do not wish to do you any injury."

"And how does your master know of me?"

"You will learn that of himself. Are you not a Neapolitan knight? Have you not letters to deliver to him?"

"Certainly I have."

"Come then, for you are expected."

Although Rogiero had peculiar views, for the time in which he lived, yet both by his natural disposition, and from the adventures which had befallen him, he was convinced that there was a destiny which governed all his actions; that he might indeed, for a time, struggle against it, but that, willing or not, he must eventually yield to it. Induced by this feeling, he allowed himself to be conducted unresistingly by those horsemen, who, riding leisurely that they might not irritate him, arrived late in the night at a castle, which, as well as he could see in

the uncertain light, seemed of great strength. Around the castle were pitched a number of tents, whence trooped a multitude of soldiers all going in one direction; a bell was sounding incessantly to assemble them, and at a short distance was heard the calling of the rolls, the assignment of the posts, and the issuing of orders. When they reached the gate, a sentinel, who was pacing to and fro with his halbert on his shoulder, stopped suddenly and demanded :

“ Who goes there ? ”

“ Long live the Ghibellines ! ” replied the captain.

“ Approach and give the countersign.”

The captain advanced, and whispered a word in his ear, then turning to his band said : “ Forward.”

Traversing extensive cloisters, they finally reach an old court-yard, where under the colonnade appear a number of troopers, some of whom are amusing themselves with chess or hazard, some drinking deeply, and conversing and gesticulating violently. Here, three or four are trying to join in a song, but at the very first notes, some one of them sings false, and they begin again; there, a few are sitting with closed eyes, and their heads gradually fall on their breasts; they start from their momentary slumbers, only to nod again; others, entirely overcome by sleep, have crossed their arms upon the tables, and resting their heads upon them are snoring so loudly as to be heard to a great distance. Some are doing one thing, some another, for it would take too long to describe them all. In short, those countenances, partially illuminated by a reddish light, those gestures, those threatening and varied aspects, would have furnished a subject to the Fleming for a wonderful picture.

No sooner had the captain made his appearance, than there arose from all sides a tumult of voices crying : “ Good-evening—welcome,—have you had good sport, captain? Did you catch your man? Tell us about it, Piero. Come here, you may take my place; Piero, will you make a fourth; we cannot begin our game without you. Here, Piero, take a glass of wine; you must want it.”

"Thanks, Malatolta; thanks, Prendiparte; thanks, thanks, sirs; I will be with you in a moment," cried the guide of our hero, first distinguishing each one by his name and surname, and then saluting all promiscuously, as if to give the lie to that philosopher* who declared that external objects strike the human mind at first indistinctly, then gradually grow clear, and thus unite the *analytical* examination with its opposite, the *synthetical*, with a hundred other graceful trifles, which have been set in our brains at school, as stones are set in a ring.

The captain, dismounting, hurried Rogiero, who earnestly recommended Allah to his care, to the part of the castle opposite that by which they had entered. Looking up at the upper windows, and seeing a light, he muttered, as if in haste to be at liberty: "Now he can just as well go by himself;" and as they reached the threshold of a little door he added, "Sir Knight, Messer Buoso is certainly in his room, for I saw a light shining there. You can easily find him without my accompanying you. Mount these stairs, which will lead you to a landing-place where three corridors meet: take the first one to the left; when you reach the end of it, turn to the right and you will find six steps; be careful not to stumble as you ascend them, and the Lord help you. You will then see a large hall with five doors in it; the one just opposite you is the door of Messer Buoso's room; good-night." Hardly stopping to finish the sentence, which he uttered with amazing rapidity, he ran to join his companions, who greeted him with shouts and laughter, and other marks of intemperate joy.

Rogiero ascended the staircase. It was made of bricks; time had worn away the edges and the cement, leaving depressions nearly large enough to receive the foot. Constantly in danger of falling, groping, supporting himself more by his hands than by his feet, he reached the entrance of the three corridors, illuminated by a dim lamp

* Condillac, *Logica* in princ.

which *seemed extinguished*, as that whimsical Florentine said.*

Here a sudden tremor seized him ; he tried to go forward, he could not ; back, equally impossible ; he leaned against the wall, as if turned to stone. New doubts, new hesitations ; another step, and he is irreparably lost ; his intentions are good, but supported by deeds partly mean, partly dishonorable, all wicked. If he does not succeed in accomplishing them who will believe that his design was generous ? There will not always be darkness, as in that place, nor can treachery be always concealed. While he thus delayed, thinking of these things, he felt a hand lightly laid upon his head, and a soft voice murmured in his ear : "*Remember your father !*"

"*Santa Maria !*" exclaimed Rogiero ; and turning quickly, he saw, or thought he saw, in the corridor opposite, a phantom gliding away from him. Impelled by an unconquerable desire to know what it was, he followed it at his utmost speed. He passed through that corridor, then through another, the spectre still keeping a few paces in advance, though he did not hear a footfall. Although these circumstances were more than sufficient in those times, and perhaps even in our own, to make him believe this apparition supernatural, Rogiero did not allow himself to be influenced by fear ; although in truth he did not know how to explain it, he was careful not to attribute it to supernatural causes. The spectre retreating and Rogiero pursuing, they reached a place where there was no light ; thus it was perfectly easy for the former to disappear. Rogiero, groping, wishing, in spite of

* Al romor del tracollo
Che rimbombò dal tetto al fondamento,
Comparve *un lumicin che pareva spento*,
Si faceva lume a stento.

SONETTO DEL MIGLIORUCCI, *Barbiere Fiorentino*.

From the roof, through the floor and the wall,
When resounded the noise of the fall,
In the distance a lamp faintly gleamed,
So dim, that extinguished it seemed.

the darkness, to follow, stumbled and fell over a couch ; then neither hearing nor seeing anything, he endeavored to return. Thinking that he was retracing his steps, he passed through two or three rooms, in the last of which he perceived a ray of light shining through the chink of a door ; he immediately went towards it, thinking that it came from the light at the head of the stairs. He reached it, opened it, and found himself in an immense room. A very small part of it was lighted, the rest being lost in the deepest shadow. Judging by what he saw of it, it was hung with beautiful Flemish tapestries, representing hunts or the most renowned warlike exploits of the Paladins of Charlemagne or of the knights-errant of King Arthur. At equal distances on one side, and probably around the whole room, were arranged suits of ancient armor, supported by lances resting in stone sockets. The windows, receiving their light from the court-yard, showed scenes taken from the New Testament, formed from glass of a thousand different tints. These things, which we have required half a page to describe, Rogiero saw at a glance ; nor indeed did he stop to observe them, for they were common in those times. His attention was more particularly attracted by two persons who were in the room. One of these, of foreign dress and appearance, was a French courier, dressed in a yellow doublet, reaching nearly to his knees, fastened round his waist by a broad leather belt, from which hung his horn and dagger ; his breeches were of the same material as his doublet, and like it, fitting closely ; he wore boots of red leather, with spurs adapted rather for stabbing than for urging a horse ; his head was uncovered ; his hair, parted in the middle, fell down on either side to his ears, growing gradually longer till at the back it reached to his shoulders ; his face said nothing—it was a blank surface. Very different seemed the second : he was seated before a table upon which were papers and a sword ; his head was resting on his hand, and he appeared to be reflecting upon a letter which apparently he had just received. His head was bald, the skin smooth, with the exception of

two or three wrinkles deeply furrowing his forehead ; his face was broad at the cheek bones, which anatomists call the zygomatic process, but thin and sharp towards the chin, with the beard shamefully neglected. As to the rest of his person, with the exception of the gauntlets, he was fully armed ; after he had pondered for some time over the letter, he exclaimed, " Eight thousand golden florins ! I would sell my soul too for it."

After this shocking impiety, he raised his eyes—what eyes ! cavernous, glittering like those of a fox which has seized the prey—and saw Rogiero.

" Who are you ? Who brought you here ? How did you obtain entrance into my room ?"

" My lord, I have been brought here by order of a certain Buoso da Duera."

" By mine then,—but how happens it that you did not come in by the principal door, instead of entering unexpectedly from a private apartment ?"

" What could I know of it, my lord ? I was left without escort, and in this strange place. I find myself here, because I am not anywhere else."

" Some one has disobeyed my orders. You are perhaps that Neapolitan knight ?"

" I am. Your men stopped me on the road, compelling me . . ."

" It was necessary to compel you. Good heavens ! You have letters for me which you probably would never have brought me."

" And who told you, my lord . . . ?"

" Whoever told me could say it without much fear of lying. Was Piero the captain who brought you here ?"

" Yes, Piero."

" And he stayed ?"

" If I am not mistaken, in the court-yard, to play and drink with his companions."

" He must be punished. It is sufficient to write great faults on the tablets of memory, but little ones must be noted down that they may not be forgotten ; a fault passed over is an invitation to crime." And here Buoso drew some tablets from his breast, upon one of which he

wrote : " Captain Piero has incurred a penalty for transgressing my commands." And putting them back he added, " Before the end of the month he must pay it either secretly or openly. Sir Knight, will you please to give me the letters you have for me ? "

" Here they are."

" Knight," said Buoso, when he had read them, " I perceive by these that a great number of Neapolitan nobles, weary of Manfred's tyranny, have sent you with their credentials to offer homage to the Count of Provence. It is not the will of God that I should oppose any obstacle to the reasonable wishes of these valiant lords. To-morrow you may pursue your way to the French army, which you will find not far from here, encamped in the country. I should warn you, however, that the count does not accompany the army, but you will find in his stead the Countess Beatrice and the general-in-chief, Guy de Montfort."

" I beg your pardon, my Lord Buoso, but will you be kind enough to answer a question ? "

" Ask on."

" Are you not a Ghibelline ? "

" What is the meaning of Guelph or Ghibelline ? I am for myself. I care no more for the name than for the color of my dress ; for my part, I follow fortune."

" But have you not hitherto fought for the Ghibellines ? "

" I repeat that I always fight for myself. It is true that last year I assisted Count Giordano, who joined Manfred here in Lombardy, with five hundred lances ; my only reward consisted in words, sometimes courteous, sometimes threatening. Every man may err once in his life, and happy is he who can boast of having erred only once ; now I am tired of living upon promises ; and then age is coming upon me, and I must begin to think of death. If others do not care, I do for the pardon of the Holy Church ; and I am anxious to be absolved from excommunication, that when it pleases God to call me to Himself, I may be buried in consecrated ground."

" My lord, I pray, if the question be not a troublesome one, does your heart say nothing to you ? "

"Where is the heart? As for myself I have forgotten it. The head does all, calculates all; the heart is superfluous; cool calculation is necessary to make one's way in the world. With the heart one makes love-songs, not plans whereby to succeed in life."

"But Italy?"

"Italy is here," replied Buoso, touching his forehead: "I have heard of times when she was elsewhere, but I have not seen them, nor do I believe in them. Nevertheless, if they can be, while we are waiting for them, let every man point to his forehead and say, 'Italy is here.'"

"Fame, then?"

"Oh! Fame! It is the shadow of success: be sure to continue fortunate, and men will be sure to call you great."

"I never till this moment heard mortal tongue uphold treachery."

"Nor do I uphold it. Treachery, if I am not mistaken, means to break one's faith. Now there is no faith stronger or more reasonable than that which every man owes to himself, for nature has bound its contract with conditions that cannot be broken, for when you injure yourself you commit treachery and irreparable treachery. I have never done any harm to others which, by drinking or sleeping upon it, I could not entirely forget; so the sorrow we have given our fellow-creatures remains in our minds like a remembrance, but the good we have done ourselves clings to us like a feeling."

"And is this feeling in itself a happy one?"

"Sir Knight, I have something else to do besides answering your questions. If you asked them to sound me, I have already told you enough, if you are wise, to enable you to understand me; if to satisfy your own doubts, I must blame my friends of Naples, who have chosen in you such a scrupulous messenger. Hold yourself in readiness to go to-morrow; at daybreak I will send you together with this French courier to the camp of the count, to deliver your letters, and if it would not trouble you, one from me also, which I will write before I sleep."

"I submit myself to your pleasure."

"Sergio! Gilberto!" called Buoso, and immediately two servants appeared, to whom he gave the order: "See that these guests are well cared for; look to it that they want nothing that they can desire. Adieu, Sir Knight; I hope to see you again before your departure."

Rogiero and the French courier followed the attentive servants, who with several candles lighted the way; hardly had they left the hall, when the voice of Buoso was again heard crying: "Sir Knight!"

Rogiero returned and asked: "What do you wish?"

"Sir Knight, do you know much about golden florins?"

Rogiero colored slightly, and answered no.

Buoso smiled, and drawing out his purse, said: "That is a great pity for a knight like you! You do not know the florin, which is the most beautiful coin struck in all Christendom? There are some who prefer the *agostari* of Frederick* or the *schifati* of the Normans, but give me the beautiful golden florin, which is coined at Florence. See here," he added, drawing one forth, and showing it to Rogiero;—"on the one side the lily, on the other John the Baptist, whence the true proverb—'Those are the best friends who have the sitting saint and the golden lily.' It is now twelve years since they were first coined by the Florentine merchants; the gold is twenty-four carats fine; they are worth twenty *soldi* apiece, and eight weigh an ounce. Would you do me a favor, Sir Knight?"

"What is it?"

"To-morrow, in the camp of Charles, you will see a certain number of them given to a courier to bring to me. It is a gift which the good Countess Beatrice wishes to make me, and which I am not in a position to refuse. Now I beg you to trouble yourself so far as to see that there are a good eight thousand of them; if there are

* A gold piece coined in the reign of Frederick II. On one side it had the imperial eagle, on the other the head of the Emperor; its value was nearly five dollars.

more, let it go ; but if the sum is not complete, warn the countess of the deficiency. Will you promise me to do so ? ”

“ I promise you.”

“ Many thanks, Sir Knight.”

There is a worthy companion for Gano de Mayence, thought Rogiero to himself,—and I ?—That night sleep visited not his weary eyes.

“ Good-day to you, my dear cousin,” said the Countess Beatrice, as she met Count Guy de Montfort at the door of the room where she had slept. She advanced hastily, with her dress more disarranged than was fitting in a noble dame ; her maidens hastened after her and continued adjusting, one her veil, another her girdle, another some other part of her dress, as she hurried along.

“ Lady, may you be successful in everything you wish ; what troubles you that you have risen so discomposed ? ”

“ Cousin, has the courier arrived ? ”

“ Lady, he has not yet been seen.”

“ Can Duera have betrayed us ? Did the reward appear too small ? Cousin, send some men to learn what has happened. Let them offer the wretch double the sum if he will let us pass. Pelavicino will quickly be upon us ; if that should happen, we are lost. Hasten, dear cousin, hasten.”

“ Let us wait awhile, lady.”

“ Ah ! Guy, Guy, your slowness will ruin us ; what do you fear ? ”

“ What do I fear ? If Charles had not commanded me to bring him the army entire at any sacrifice, or if he had not caused me to be accompanied by feminine fears, I would already have routed Duera and crossed the Oglio ; for my years have been spent in conquering my enemies with the sword, but I have never learned to drive them away by gold ; nevertheless, since it has pleased Monseigneur Charles to send me by this route full of dangers, but wholly without honor, I must take

care of his money, for if we double the reward of Buoso we shall not have enough to defray the expenses of the army to Rome."

The countess was about to reply, and who knows when the discussion would have ended, if a page had not entered at that moment, announcing that the courier, bringing another man with him, could be seen riding towards the house.

"Thank God!" exclaimed the countess, and ran to the window. "Yes, certainly it is he himself, . . . come and see, cousin; . . . but what is the matter with the lazy fellows that they ride so slowly? Count, one would think that you had infected all the horses in the army with your own inactivity; another time, count, take care to give your couriers the best horses in the camp. Tell me, count, in how many days can we reach Rome?"

"Countess, receive good fortune with more equanimity, and you will feel grief less in adversity. You do not yet know what news the courier brings."

"Oh, my heart predicts good tidings, and it has never deceived me. There is your hateful, scornful smile. What would you have, cousin? I am made so; to receive good and evil tidings with the same demeanor is perfectly impossible to me. What can you say of me? The countess laughs when fortune is propitious, weeps when it is adverse; but do you in your own heart do otherwise? And you boast so much of your self-control, —of your power over your feelings; ah, for shame! weep or laugh when you feel so disposed. Do you think that I should lose my courage, and basely complain of adversities, nor use what sense and strength Heaven has granted me, to overcome them?"

"Countess, the man who accompanies our courier is a knight; would it not be well for you to retire and arrange your dress a little?"

"Count de Montfort, we beg of you not to be more concerned for our person than we ourselves are," said the Countess Beatrice with a scornful gesture. Then looking around, and perceiving that she was in truth rather loosely arrayed, she blushed, smiled, and added: "Dear

cousin, I see that when you have lost a little of your soldierly roughness, you will become an excellent major-domo for the most stubborn lady who has passed her thirtieth year." Then the same impulse which had brought her to that room in such *deshabille*, induced her to leave it to adjust her dress, for the desire of appearing well, if in some few women it is not the principal passion, is certainly the second.

When the countess returned to the hall, the courier and Rogiero were just entering by another door. The courier, kneeling, announced his companion as the bearer of the reply; the countess raised him graciously, and with the usual promise that his services should be remembered, dismissed him. Then Rogiero, slightly saluting the lady, presented the letters, which she, not able to read, gravely transferred to Count de Montfort, saying to him in a low voice: "Hasten, count, for I am very anxious to know their contents."

De Montfort began to peruse them, but before he was half through, the countess had interrupted him two or three times, asking: "Oh! what does he say?—Oh! what is it?"

"But, lady," said De Montfort, out of patience, "if you do not let me read, it will take me a thousand years to tell you." He himself was no scholar, being able to read only with difficulty, and he often muttered between his teeth: "This fellow shows himself a rascal even in his handwriting! would that the chaplain were here to make out this scrawl."—At last, in some way or other, he read it, and without waiting to be asked, said softly to the countess: "The traitor accedes to the plan, although he writes, that as he has taken the trouble to send you a Neapolitan knight, who will bring you more pleasing intelligence than that which relates to the pass of the Oglio, he thinks that the sum might be augmented. He begs you, when you reach Rome, to use your influence that he might be reconciled to the Church, and become a sharer in the holy indulgences promised to whoever takes up the cross against Manfred."

"In regard to the first request, you may answer,

count, that we would willingly show our good-will to him more bountifully, but that our present straitened circumstances do not permit it ; and that we estimate highly the service that he renders us, and that the house of France takes pride in showing itself grateful. As to the second, assure him that we shall bear in mind to plead with Pope Clement to bless him again, and receive him as a son ; let him be at rest upon this point, for we shall care for him as for a brother."

"Ah ! countess, the union of Buoso with the Prince of Darkness seems to me so perfect, that it would be a great sin to disturb it."

After these words, the countess, turning towards Rogiero with womanly grace, said to him : "Sir Knight, we understand by these letters that you are the bearer of good news ; impart it to us, and thus may you ever preserve your lady's love."

"Lady, what it is, you will learn from these papers."

De Montfort, to whom they were handed, read first with his natural coolness, but as he went on he began to shake his head, muttering the words indistinctly. When he reached the end, he dropped the paper, and raising his hands and eyes, said with a sigh : "Good Heavens ! we shall have Italy without striking a blow ! I thought it a land of honor . . ."

So great was Rogiero's shame at this exclamation, that, overcome by his emotions, he leaned against the wall, to save himself from falling.

"What are you muttering, count ?"

"This land belongs to any one who will take it."

"Why, count ?"

"Because traitors take root here more readily than the loyal, and the greatest of Manfred's barons call us, *as usual*, liberators, because we are going to liberate them from their tyrant ; for, *as usual*, they give that name to the man whom they wish to betray."

"Ah, cousin ! so great is the joy you have given me that I am ready to faint. I shall at last wear the crown ! I too shall be saluted as queen ! I shall no longer be distinguished from my proud sisters by the mark of shame !

I too shall be able to hold up my head bravely ! I too . . . Count de Montfort, it seems as if you were an enemy, that you grieve at what delights me !”

“Madame, your wish was to obtain a crown. It will be granted you : you are rejoiced at it, it is well ; mine was to bring to a successful issue a glorious undertaking, and to die honorably. I see now that it is an error to hope it in this country, therefore I grieve.”

“It is a generous sorrow, and well worthy of you, brave baron,” said the countess, pressing De Montfort's hand ; “but rejoice for my sake, for you ought not to grieve at what pleases me.”

“Ah ! my beautiful cousin, if I wished to infuse bitterness that you could not forget into your present pleasure, I would tell you that the traitor does not change his heart with the treachery that he commits. He remains like a wild beast in his den, awaiting the prey ; the dominion of Charles will become distasteful as that of Manfred has, and then . . .”

“Your observations are as appropriate as to speak of death at table, or to wear black at a wedding. Joy is so rare and so sweet, that it should not be disturbed by your melancholy fancies. It will be bitter enough to think of misfortune when it comes : at present, count, let us be merry : ‘leave care for the morrow.’ And you, Sir Knight, know that you could have brought no news more grateful than this, to the Countess Beatrice. Henceforward you will be with us ; I hope that you will often gratify me with your presence. Meanwhile, not that I consider it any recompense, but merely as a mark of my gratitude, wear this jewel for my sake.” And here, taking off a rich chain, she placed it with her own hands round Rogiero's neck, who, as he heard it ring against his armor, shuddered and muttered : “Behold the crime is completed, the reward of treachery has been accepted. My soul has received the stamp of infamy, which eternity can never efface.”

De Montfort, observing the immoderate vivacity of the countess, shaking his head, smiled slightly, and said in a low voice : “She is a noble woman, but still a woman.”

Beatrice, diverted by another care, little heeding whether Rogiero had thanked her or not, ordered the money to be brought, counted it, and gave it to the courier, to take to Duera. De Montfort had gone to give orders for the advance of the army, but like a wise captain he took good care that his forces should be arranged in every particular as if the enemy were there to attack them.

Buoso, having received the money, shut himself up in Cremona, spreading the report that the French, crossing the river Serio, had fallen back upon Milan, to attempt the route through Parma. The army of Charles crossed the Oglio without opposition, and following its course, reached the Mantuan territory, where, joyfully received by Ludovico, Count of San Bonifazio, the troops rested somewhat from the fatigues they had endured. Resuming their march, they crossed the Po upon a bridge prepared for them by the Marquis Obizzo d'Este, and reached the territory of Romagna in safety. Now began for Charles d'Anjou the series of prosperous events which enabled him in a few months to overturn the noble monarchy of Manfred. It is said that the Marquis Oberto Pelavicino, who, having been advised of the movements of the French, had immediately left his position at Pavia, reached Soncino a few hours after they had passed it; where, seeing how the skilful General Guy de Montfort had fortified the opposite bank of the river, he thought it best not to follow him, and full of anger joined Buoso in Cremona. The interview of these two captains was full of bitterness. If the report deserves belief, Pelavicino is said to have prophesied to him: "Buoso, I am not astonished that you endeavor to conceal your crime with falsehood. You have committed the greatest, you can commit the lesser. But if it is your part to deceive me, it is mine not to believe you. I might reveal your disloyalty to the nation, arouse the excited people against you, bring you and your race to a miserable end; but God forbid that by me should the sword be raised against my brother-in-arms, against him to whom I have sworn friendship from my earliest years. Nevertheless, bear it in your memory, that with the price of your betrayed country you have

bought for yourself ruin in this life, and damnation in the next."

A mind worthy of immortality, which from its prison of clay dared to conceive the design of looking upon the Eternal, and to examine the mysteries of Nature, distributing at his will rewards and punishments, has plunged into the infernal frosts that doomed spirit,* and, as though divine wisdom had taken care to fulfil the prediction of Oberto, the end of Buoso's life was in nothing less terrible than he had foretold him. The people, learning his perfidy, infuriated with anger, overthrew his house, destroyed his family,—but granted him life. Buoso, overwhelmed with want and misery, wandered through the streets of the city of which he had been the lord, for Providence, to complete his punishment, had deprived him of the will to take his own life. During the day he wandered in his fierce loneliness, muttering rapidly like a lunatic, heeding neither the cries, the contumelies, nor the blows with which he was constantly persecuted. At night, when ravenous hunger tormented him, he would stop in some dark place, and concealing his face, extend his hand, begging charity for the love of God, in a voice which he endeavored to disguise. Useless attempt! there was no one who did not recognize him. Some passed, shutting their hearts and purses against him, and in a harsh voice telling him: "Despair and die!" These were the most compassion-

* Va'via, rispose, e ciò che tu vuoi conta :
Ma non tacer, se tu di qua entr'eschi,
Di que' ch' ebb' or così la lingua pronta ;
Ei piange qui l'argento de' Franceschi :
Io vidi, potrai dir, quel da Duera
Là dove i peccatori stanno freschi.

DANTE, *Inferno*, c. 32.

"Away!" he answered: "what thou wilt, relate;
But, shouldst thou get from hence with breath again,
Mention him too so ready with his prate.
Here he bewails that silver of the French:
I saw Duera's lord, thou mayst declare,
Down where the sinners in the coolness blench."

Translation of T. W. PARSONS, ESQ.

ate ! Those who possessed the diabolical knowledge of adding torment to degradation, and enjoyed making the iron enter more deeply into the soul, gave him a penny, and with it the imprecation that food might be turned to poison in his blood, and drink become as gall and vinegar to his agonized soul. One evening, trembling, his teeth chattering with fever-chills, he went towards a monastery, hoping that the friars would receive him out of compassion ; he ascended the first and second step, he raised his hand to knock, when suddenly he falls forward against the door, and slipping along the wall, rolls down the steps ; in the morning the porter found him as cold as the stone upon which he lay. The friars protected his remains from the insults of the people, and buried them in the cloisters. The charity of religion stifled reproach upon the lip, but could utter no prayer over him, nor sprinkle him with holy water. Pity herself sighed with pleasure over that miserable grave.

CHAPTER XII.

THE KNIGHT OF THE THUNDERBOLT.

L'una zuffa e poi l'altra io vi vo' dire
Che in due luoghi ad un tempo si travaglia,
Lo strepito è sì grande del ferire,
Lo spezzar della piastra e della maglia,
Che fa chi guarda intorno sbigottire.

ARIOSTO, *Orlando Furioso*.

Two combats for my warlike theme I take,
That in two places at one time prevail :
So harsh the clangor meeting weapons make,
So loud resound the blows on coats of mail,
That well the looker on with fear may quake.

M. G. M.



PERHAPS it was the reward of constancy. Charles of Anjou reached the shore. When his courage was struggling with death, if any one had placed a hand on his heart, he would have felt its pulsations neither increase nor diminish ; when, losing all hopes of outside help, his soul was reduced to the alternative either to give up in despair or survive, it brought forth a vigor, of which he himself would not have thought it capable, if the occasion had not presented itself. Charles reached the land, for his galley had been submerged only a mile distant from the shore, between Cape Linaro and Civita Vecchia ; but so weak and exhausted, that it seemed as if his strength had only lasted long enough not to perish in the water. In the morning there was seen that ambitious man, destined to overthrow the throne of the great Frederick, stretched motionless upon the sand, chilled through all his bones, dripping wet from head to foot. The vilest of men could have insulted him, the most cowardly have killed him ; the slightest breath could have extinguished that vital spark which

was flickering doubtfully around the seat of all sensations. The sun, distilling into his veins its reviving warmth, heated his blood, and recalled his senses to their usual office ; he rose to a sitting posture as one beside himself, and turned his wandering eyes upon the surface of the waters. The heaven smiled serene, the sea was calm ; indeed one could have noticed floating planks, oars, oarsmen, witness of its terrible fury ; yet it now rejoiced in a beautiful azure ; placidly rippling, as under the steps of our Lord, it seemed to invite one with the flattery of its charms to trust to its immense surface. Likewise sin tempts one ! Over all the débris of the shipwreck was to be noticed the poor master of the galley : he lay supine, his body swollen, floating here and there at the mercy of the wind and waves like a cork island ; at times the sea, lifting him on its surface, seemed to hand him back to earth, but suddenly withdrawing, carried him farther out than before ; at other times it would deposit him on the shore, but soon after, as if repenting, turned to bear him off again ; if it did not reach far enough once or twice, it would recede as much as possible, as if to take a proper distance in order to rush more impetuously, so that the third or fourth time, surging around him, foaming, gurgling, it would carry him off in triumph. It seemed like a boy amusing himself with his plaything . . . but the playthings of the sea are ships submerged and shipwrecked mariners.

“ Poor Master Armond ! ” sighed Charles, after having sadly observed him a long time, and his soul was absorbed in mournful meditations ;—when, lifting his head, he noticed several sails appearing on the horizon, which, aided by a favorable breeze, were steering for the land ; and behold Charles, forgetting every other sensation, anxious between fear and joy, rose to his feet to discover whether by chance they may not be his. Compassion in the heart of the ambitious man passes as swiftly as a lucid interval in the mind of the insane. . . . Master Armond, the pilot, and their brothers in misfortune, disappeared from the memory of the count, never to return again.

"Is this a deception of my eyes? or my desire deceives me?" exclaimed Charles, rubbing his eyes to see better. "Is not that my beloved flag? Certainly, it is blue . . . no . . . yes; so may St. Denis grant these to be my ships, as that flag is really blue! Alas! But Manfred's flag also bears a field of the same color, . . . but the white eagle makes a larger mark, and would be seen from here. . . . Swaying its folds methought I saw red . . . yes, red. . . . Glorious St. Martin! The golden *fleur-de-lis*!"

And here he showed his extreme joy with such wild demonstrations, that he himself always blushed afterwards, whenever he remembered it; for it is a very old proverb, that "no man is a hero when all alone."

Fortune, womanlike, tired of Manfred, followed the footprints of Charles, and like a woman abandoned the good for the bad. The galleys, called by the signals made by Charles, approached the shore, and the French hailed their lord with transports of joy, as if he had miraculously arisen from the dead. Not far from where they were they could discern the belfries, the church cupolas, and the houses of a city,—it was Civita Vecchia. Charles, coasting along the shore, brought his twenty galleys into that port, and, leaving them there, with a part of his people he hastily marched to Viterbo to meet Pope Clement. They embraced and welcomed each other as two men bound by present need and future interest.

By another route, Montfort, with a rare example of prosperous fortune, having passed through the Roman States, where he had been joined by the Guelphs of Italy, among which were the four hundred Florentine men-at-arms, was approaching Viterbo. Glad was Count Charles of the arrival of Montfort, and much more so of the four hundred Florentines that had joined him. It is well to know that in 1260, when the Ghibelline party headed by Farinata degli Uberti prevailed in Florence, all the Guelphs evacuated the town on the night of the 13th September, and sought a refuge in the city of Lucca. They were well received for a long time by the faithful Lucca people, until they themselves were defeated in the war which

they sustained against the invincible Farinata. The Florentines were obliged to seek a safer asylum, in order to escape the bitter persecutions of their enemies. "It was a very sad spectacle," says the historian who narrates these events, "matrons and children escaping over the Alpine heights of St. Pellegrino; many of the principal citizens dying of hunger and cold in the road, until they reached Bologna." Here the men trained themselves for the profession of arms, exercising daily, so that in a short time they acquired the reputation of valorous knights. Called to Modena by the Guelph faction, they subdued the Ghibellines; the same they did at Reggio, where twelve of them, who afterwards were called the paladins, overcame and killed the famous giant named *Tacha*, who with an enormous iron mace killed and maimed everybody, as the reader, who is desirous of learning those things, can find in the chronicles of the times. These soldiers of fortune, who had earned much in those wars, mounted magnificent horses and wore very rich armor. They were led by Guido Guerra, cadet of the Counts Guidi, grand nephew of that Guido Sangue who also escaped from the slaughter that the people of Ravenna committed of all his family, if it be true what the ancient historians have transmitted to us. Charles, having no more money, was very lavish to them of promises, and the pontiff of indulgences; so much so that this latter allowed them to carry his own flag, displaying on a field *argent*, an eagle *gules*, with serpent *vert* in its claws.

The Florentines received it with the joy of hatred that supposes itself sanctified; only they added to it a fleur-de-lis *gules* over the head of the eagle; since *argent* with a fleur-de-lis *gules* were the arms of the Guelphs of Florence, *gules* with a fleur-de-lis *argent* being the arms of the Ghibellines.

Now the French and the Italian Guelphs united in military order, with the Pontiff and Count of Provence at their head, moved from Viterbo towards Rome. Clement, clothed in his pontifical garments, mounted a snow-white palfrey; the magnificence of his mantle was such, that it covered not only his person, but also the whole of the

palfrey, whence Dante with his keen satire, said what he did in the twenty-first canto of *Il Paradiso*.*

His horse's trappings, which were covered outside with scarlet velvet, were embroidered in gold; the very long saddle cloth of the same material was also embroidered with roses of gold. He wore on his head a mitre similar to that worn nowadays by the bishops; for the triple crown did not yet adorn the pontifical heads, and it was only towards the end of that century that Boniface VIII., the glorious Pope, first used it. In his left hand he held the silver crosier, like the shepherd's hook, to denote the mildness with which our Saviour ordained that the faithful should be governed. He lifted his right hand in the act of blessing, and it was so habituated to this motion, that it blessed when there was no need of it. Both his hands were covered with most beautiful gloves, and on the third finger of his right hand, over the glove, shone a most precious ring. On each side of his horse's head, to regulate his steps, walked two young pages sumptuously dressed, holding the bridle bit, which ended with

* Or voglion quinci e quindi chi rincalzi
 Gli moderni pastori, e chi gli meni,
 Tanto son gravi, e chi dirietro gli alzi.
 Cuopron de' manti loro i palafreni,
 Sì che due bestie van sott'una pelle :
 O pazienza, che tanto sostieni !

And when I've seen, on some high holiday,
 Through the live streets their long processions roll,
 And the fat, ermined friars on palfreys gay,—
 Both creatures covered with one furry stole,—*
 Him I remembered robed in mean array,
 Who entered Zion on an ass's foal.

He like an humble peasant meekly rode,
 While shouted forth Jerusalem a song,
 And with palm-boughs his gladsome pathway strewed ;
 Our modern pastors need a hand full strong
 On either side to prop their helpless load ;
 O, patience! patience! that endur'st so long !
 T. W. PARSONS, ESQ., *Paraphrase of a passage in Dante.*

* "Both *beasts* furred over with a single stole," or "two beasts under one skin," would be nearer to Dante's expression.

golden rings, from which hung tassels of crimson silk. Charles d'Anjou rode on the right hand of the Pope. He wore a complete steel armor, wonderfully inlaid with golden arabesques, only that, instead of a helmet, he wore on his head a count's coronet. In his hand he carried a golden staff adorned with precious stones: from the top of his left shoulder, fastened by a beautifully embroidered ribbon, hung the cross that he had received from the Cardinal Simon of Tours, to indicate to those who would believe it, that no earthly interest but the greater glory of the Church had induced him to that war against Manfred. A mantle like the imperial, lined with ermine, and embroidered outside with golden fleur-de-lis, completed the dress. The horse which Monseigneur Charles mounted was the same that he always rode in his war campaigns; a generous animal, white as snow-flakes, born of an Arab mare, by a stallion of Normandy. From his flesh-colored nostrils he seemed to sniff the battle. He was beautifully formed in every part of his body, but was rather heavily caparisoned by a leather accoutrement, ornamented with arabesques and steel buckles. By the manner in which the count restrained the impatience of his generous steed, he showed himself a master of horsemanship, and though impassible in his countenance, still one could observe that he rather incited than repressed him. On the other side rode Countess Beatrice upon a Spanish jennet, who, as if conscious of the high rank of the rider, tossed his head and curvetted in a beautiful manner. She, boldly disdaining to have her bridle held by a squire, as was the custom of the ladies of those days, guided the horse herself. Although she had pawned or sold many of her jewels, as we have said before, in order to assist her husband in that enterprise, one must not suppose that there had not been left enough for her to appear well adorned with them; she wore around her waist a bodice of golden scales, which outlined her figure as far as the hips, in the same manner as the ancient Roman cuirasses; in the middle of the breast was a fleur-de-lis formed of sapphires, rubies and other precious stones; all the rest was adorned with rosettes composed of fine small

stones of different colors : a very rich belt surrounded her waist, on one side of which was fastened a purse, on the other a poniard ; her dress of blue velvet was embroidered with golden fleur-de-lis like that of Charles ; her hair, arranged in very small braids that covered part of her cheeks and neck, was surmounted by the coronet of a countess. Beatrice was not handsome, but tall and majestic. In her face there appeared that indefinite stamp of authority that the lords of the earth derive from their fathers, or rather from the habit of commanding. The people gathered on the passage, at the appearance of so magnificent a lady, would acclaim her, and she with eyes sparkling with joy would, courteously smiling, return their salutations. There followed after them the principal barons of Provence and of France, with different accoutrements and arms, to describe which, we could easily fill a thousand and more pages, much to the injury of our publishers ; then followed the army, divided into squadrons, beautifully arrayed, each of which was led by a knight of great renown in arms.

In this wise they marched as far as Baccano. Here they met two hundred light horsemen, dressed with blue tunics embroidered with golden fleur-de-lis, mounted upon horses all of one color. They stood facing the advancing army, and so they remained until it had approached within a bow-shot ; then they started their horses at a precipitous speed, with their lances lowered, as if they intended to assail it ; but of a sudden they stopped short, and then they scattered themselves, representing a battle of infinite single combats. Having exchanged a few blows, they raised their lances and presented a long lane of interwoven weapons. Then they returned to their skirmishing, and some went out and others came in ; some ran to one side, some to the other, and then they would agglomerate and entangle each other so as to form a swarming and orderly confusion, wonderful to look at. At a given signal, in less time than it takes to relate, they appeared drawn up in hollow squares, in close or open ranks, in a line along the road, or in separate sections ; then they resumed new

sham fights, new groups, and always so varied and beautiful to look at, that I believe no such figures are executed nowadays in the so much boasted modern ballets.

This spectacle, which did not cease until they had arrived at the distance of seven miles from Rome, was surprisingly agreeable to Charles. At that point, however, giving their horses the rein, they disappeared. After the count had ridden quite a long distance, he saw them again across the road, immovable as the first time, holding their lances up, with pennants fluttering; but this time they did not stir at his approach. Charles was watching attentively to see what would take place, when they opened right and left, and there appeared from behind them a magnificent embassy of Roman noblemen, who, dressed in their ermine togas, presented themselves before the pope. Kneeling on the ground, they offered him the golden keys of the city; after which the one who seemed the highest in authority among them, after having received due permission from the pope, delivered an address, which was neither in Latin nor in Italian, but which he intended for the purest Latin. This we shall not report, for it is enough to state that it was, as usual, humiliating and servile, and, although it lasted more than half an hour, the gist of it was, that—it was the universal desire of the Senate and people of Rome, *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, that Charles should be elected Senator of Rome, as if the dominion of the pope was not enough, and even too much, for them. And here we desire you to note, gentle reader, that scarcely four years before this, a similar embassy had been deputed to King Manfred, which assured him that it was the universal desire of the Senate and people of Rome that he should be elected *perpetual* Senator of Rome. Whether this offer, made by his subjects to Charles, was acceptable to Clement, He only knows who can penetrate the secrets of the heart. To all outward appearances, however, he seemed to be very much pleased with it, and gave a willing assent. Then they brought forth an altar, upon which were laid several relics of saints, and the book of the Gospels. The pope dismounted, and with him Charles and the rest of the army.

Then, ascending the altar, he kneeled before it, chanting a prayer, which was responded to by all the bystanders ; afterwards, rising, he asked Monseigneur Charles whether he desired to be a Senator of Rome ; to which Charles replied, that very willingly he would, if it so pleased his holiness. Clement then opened the book of the Gospels, and ordered Charles to take the usual oath. Charles, placing his hand on the Gospels, read the following formula : "We, Charles of France, by the grace of God, Count of Anjou, of Folcacchieri, of Languedoc, of Provence, etc., etc., by the free will of the Roman Senate and people, elected Senator of Rome, swear upon the holy Gospels never, either by word or deed, to injure the life or limbs of our most glorious, pious, universal, apostolic Pontiff, Clement IV., nor his successors ; to reveal all conspiracies against him ; to uphold him in the possession of the popedom and the free enjoyment of all the royalties belonging to the patrimony of St. Peter ; to insure the protection of the cardinals and their families, to maintain the city of Rome in the fulness of her territory and jurisdiction, and, in fine, to do all things that may contribute to the greater honor of the holy Church and of God." Having pronounced these words ; the pontiff placed in his hand the keys, as symbol of civil authority ; then the sword, as leader of his troops ; and finally the standard of St. Peter, as champion of the holy Church. At this point there arose such tumult of cheering, such sound of trumpets, that it was heard as far as Rome. It was already far in the night when they reached the city of the Cæsars. . . . The road was resplendent as day through the many torches that burned on each side. Under the gate stood the *Carroccio*, first invented by Aribert, Archbishop of Milan, in 1026, to serve as a signal of war to the Italian cities, not to do honor to the arrival of those whom they ought to have repulsed. This was a car, as my readers may know, drawn by four or more fat white oxen, covered with scarlet cloth richly embroidered. Around the base were fixed two tiers of benches (for the wheels were concealed within), and on these benches stood large silver candlesticks, with

enormous wax candles. From the centre of the car rose a mast, covered with drapery, in the middle of which hung a gold crucifix. From the top of the mast hung the gonfalon of Rome. The two hems of the gonfalon, which drooped ten or more yards lower than the cart, were supported on the spear points of two knights of the noblest blood, armed in full armor. Many other smaller symbolical pennons surrounded the principal one, in which there were represented the lion, to indicate strength; the woman looking on a glass, for prudence; another leaning on a pillar with scales in her hands, for justice, and many and many other virtues that the Roman people of those times had only on their flags. The knights, as soon as they saw the pontiff, the count and countess approach, advanced to meet them, and covered them with the gonfalon as with a canopy. The car moved; the pontiff was the first to pass the gates of Rome. The streets, overspread with greens and flowers, sent forth a delicious fragrance. The windows, illuminated and hung with beautiful tapestries, were crowded with ladies in their best apparel, who threw myriads of flowers of the season on the French knights. These, in return, whether young or old, turned their heads right and left like a pendulum, and every time they discovered a pretty face, they would smile, salute it with a hand to their lips, or throw back the flowers that had been showered on them. In one street was heard music and singing and women were seen dancing, and men drinking and merry-making. In another stood a juggler, astonishing with his tricks the crowd of bystanders, until he passed his hat around, crying "*largess*;" when they would all disperse right and left, seeking another one who had not yet arrived at that conclusion. Elsewhere, in the centre of a square, mounted upon a table, with a torch at his feet and a lute on his shoulder, stood the *charlatan*,* as perhaps

* The name of *charlatan* is derived from those wandering minstrels, who, like the ancient *Rhapsodys*, went from city to city singing of Charlemagne; hence the word *Carlocantare*, afterwards *Carlottanare*, and finally, with a further corruption, *Ciarlatanare*, and *Ciarlatano*, a charlatan.

did the poor blind Homer in ancient times, singing the deeds of Charlemagne, of Roland, and the other paladins. Among all that crowd intent on amusement, you might perceive the cut-purse, like a snake in the grass, gliding with stealthy steps, avoiding the light, watching the chance to pounce on the unwary; for we must be convinced, that ever since men had a head to think, and a hand to steal, there have been thieves, and that these are the usual followers of great lords when they enter with great pomp in some city. Thus, passing through many and different spectacles of rejoicing, the pontiff, the count and countess, with the principal barons, arrived at the Lateran palace. The army had already been partitioned among the different quarters prepared for it by the Roman municipality. Charles, after supper, feeling tired, was waiting for the pope to give the signal for retiring, but he dared not to ask for it. Clement did not wish him to lodge in his palace, yet he dared not tell him so; but finally, considering that it belonged to him to speak, he rose from the table, and said: "Count, we desire you to know that no catholic prince, no matter how great or powerful, has ever been lodged in this our palace of the Lateran, and this we hold not as a respect due us, who are the servant of the servants of the Lord, but to the Most High, whose Vicegerent we are. We do not intend to revoke what has been established with so much wisdom by our predecessors, and followed by so many emperors; therefore, most beloved son, you must depart without murmur. Our city abounds with palaces not less beautiful or rich than this of ours. In thus dismissing you, we do not intend to mortify you, but to show to the world the high fame which you deservedly enjoy of being the most obedient son of Holy Mother Church."

Charles, although he was not well disposed to bear the papal arrogance, as he showed a few years afterwards by the proud reply he gave to Nicholas III. of the Orsini family, on this occasion took leave with a cheerful countenance, and went to lodge somewhere else. The Count of Provence, as a wise man, thought that it was of little

consequence to submit once to another's will, in order to have it all his own way afterwards.

On the following day, the pontiff and the count met together, and agreed upon many points that had been left unsettled by their ministers, who had come to the conclusion that they would agree more readily in a personal interview. What were their conversation and their agreements is a subject for the historians: it is enough for us to state that they agreed. After their meeting, heralds went about the city, with the following proclamation: "On the approaching feast of the Epiphany, Monseigneur Charles and Lady Beatrice, Count and Countess of Provence, will be crowned King and Queen of Sicily, by the hand of His Holiness Clement IV., Most Glorious Pontiff of Rome, in the Basilica of St. John Lateran; that for three days there will be held a great open Court, the last the greatest of all, with the privilege to every knight that bears arms of attending it; that every day after the dinner there will be opened a tournament, the challengers of which were Monseigneur Guy of Montfort, Guillaume l'Etendard, Bocard and Jouan, Counts of Vandamme, Pier de Bilmont, Mirepoix *the Seneschal*, Jouan de Bresilles, and Louis Jonville; that all the knights that desired to joust against them should carry their challenge to the cloister of St. Paul, where from sunrise till sunset there would be exposed the escutcheons of the challengers; and that Countess Beatrice, queen of the tournament, and Giles Lebrun, constable of the field, would take note of the armorial devices, and the names of the knights that presented themselves, etc."

The first rays of the sun had hardly lighted our hemisphere, when a crowd of people were gathered the next day around the gates of the monastery of St. Paul, awaiting anxiously their opening. After long waiting they were opened to the curiosity of the people, who in a moment filled the vast enclosure of the cloister. It was a beautiful architecture of those times, divided in four equal parts, with arcades composed of several pointed arches, and very delicate fluted columns; the interior parts divided in several pictures, representing, by the least bloody frescos

that in those days they knew how to paint, the principal acts of the glorious apostle: among which was most praised the one representing the saint in the hands of his torturers, who were using all their efforts to stretch him on the ground in order to flagellate him. Nor were the acts of St. Paul alone painted there: there was a *portrait* of Adam tilling the ground—with a beautiful *iron* hoe; a Last Judgment, where certain diminutive devils carried off the souls in the form of little babies from the mouths of knights, kings, nuns, monks, and even from that of a pope—in fine, a Last Judgment very similar to the other painted by Andrea Orgagna upon the walls of the cemetery of Pisa; and such like. Along the walls stood the marble sarcophagi of the defunct great lords, carved with figures that the monks of the place called *human*. On their lids stood statues of those that were enclosed within: here a woman with her arms crossed on her breast, the head leaning back, the eyes shut as if dead; there a magistrate dressed in his toga, sitting on one side, with his head leaning on his hand, the face bent down, as if in deep meditation; further on a knight, armed *cap-à-pie* with a naked sword in his hand, expiring over a pile of trophies;—the common dead, without a stone, without an epitaph that would recall them to the love of their living posterity, were promiscuously buried under the pavement of the porticos. . . . Because, whether alive or dead, the common people were ever destined to serve as a pavement to be trampled upon; but since they are pleased to remain so, I have nothing to say about it. *Trahit sua quemque voluptas*. (Every one is attracted by his peculiar pleasure.)

On the side opposite to the gate from which one entered, upon a platform covered with crimson velvet, rose a spear, and upon it was hung a most splendid suit of armor. At the foot of the spear stood four cups full of golden *bésants*, the prize of the conqueror of the tournament. Beside this, but fixed in the ground, rose eight lances, from each of which hung the shield with the name and device of the knight to whom it belonged: the first one said *Montfort*, and the device was a woman re-

versed. And here we must note that, in those times, it was the greatest insult to carry the image of another, head downward on the shield ; so that the proud Montfort, desiring to show in some manner his contempt for Italy, had meant it in the figure of the woman as described above. In the second there was written *Etendard*, and the devices were, *azure, dexter and sinister arms vambrased, coupéd*, with hammers in their hands striking upon an anvil, with the motto, *It will not break by hammering* : in the third and fourth, *Vandamme* ; one was *sable, semé with roundlets, argent*, and was a gift of the lady of his thoughts, meaning by this to signify the tears that she would shed during his absence ; the other was *vert*, a man's heart *sanguine* in the midst of flames, *gules*, pierced through by an arrow *or*, similar to those which our modern lovers place on the top of their *erotic* letters ; the fifth said *Bil-mont*, and for device had *azure*, wind striving to put out a fire, *gules*, with the motto, *By blowing I will not be put out* ; the sixth *Mirepoix*, the device *vert*, a turtle *passant*, with the Latin motto, *Tarde sed tuto* ; the seventh *Bresilles*, having for device *purple*, a hound *courant* with a hare in his mouth. The last was all *argent*, as was the custom of new-made knights in their first year of knighthood, and belonged to the young Jonville. Immediately beyond these lances there was a long table covered by a rich carpet, around which were seated the most beautiful Roman and French ladies, ordinary judges of these kinds of fights, and the Countess Beatrice in a more elevated seat as queen. The constable Giles Lebrun held a parchment book on a little stool at the foot of the table to inscribe the names, and describe the armorial devices of those that presented themselves for the tournament. The other knights, some in armor, some clothed in rich silk doublets, stood all around them.

The ninth hour had already passed, and no one had yet presented himself to accept the challenge ; the fame of these French knights was so great that no one dared to oppose them. Guy de Montfort, dressed in a leathern doublet, moved about among his brothers of arms, and from time to time would say, smiling, " Did I not tell you so ? "

The people that had collected to see the sight stood fixed at the distance of four or six yards from the escutcheons of the challengers, as if a magic line kept them from coming forward. The Roman ladies stared towards the crowd to discover some of their admirers, and noticing none, lowered their heads in shame; the French exulted over the shame of Italy.

The crowd is pushed back, and there appears a knight of noble mien with the visor lowered, carrying a shield with a device similar to that of Montfort, a figure of *Italia*, only in its natural position. After saluting the ladies, he struck with the point of his lance the insulting device of Montfort. At the same moment he noticed another lance of a wonderful size, stained with marks of clotted blood, strike the same device, so that he turned his head, and perceived a knight all covered with mail, his visor down, who carried for device *azure* a thunderbolt *sanguine*, that falling from the clouds destroyed a tower or with the motto : *It falls from a hidden hand*.

"Sir Knights," said Constable Lebrun to the two who had presented themselves, "we desire to notify you that although it is in our power to accept the challenge *à toute outrage*, yet we would prefer that there should be no bloodshed."

"Truly," added Montfort, "I also advise you to do what Monseigneur the constable says, my knights, for I do not desire that on my account any lady should shed tears."

"If you do not desire to run the risk of accepting the challenge *à toute outrage*," replied the knight of *Italia*, "you have only to beg us in the presence of these ladies, and we will change it into *premier sang*."

"*Sang-bleu !*" cried Montfort, "was there ever heard such impudence? Write, constable, write their sentence of death. Mind though, my knights, that I will still grant you time to retract."

"Count," said the knight of the *thunderbolt*, "look if you please at the point of my lance; is it not blood that stains it? And mark, it is not mine, that blood."

"If deeds correspond to words," added Montfort, "I hope to derive some honor from your defeat."

"Or perhaps you will curse the day that you challenged a tournament," replied the knight of *Italia*.

"Cavaliers," spoke the knight of the *thunderbolt*, turning to the *challengers*, "boasts do not conquer in trials of arms, and are highly unsuited to noble knights; let every one do the best he can; victory will be to him to whom God will grant it . . ."

"To him to whom the lance will grant it, you ought to say, knight," replied Montfort.

"As you wish, monseigneur le count. Constable, please describe my device, for I desire my name to be hidden."

"And what shall I write of you?" asked Lebrun to the knight of *Italia*, after he had taken down the device of the knight of the *thunderbolt*.

"Describe also my device."

"Prudent thought when one foresees his defeat," said Montfort, smilingly; "in this manner one throws away his shield and his shame."

"Noble knights, our *challengers* are eight, while you are only two," said the constable; "do you alone wish to sustain the attack of all?"

"Have you any companions?" asked the knight of the *thunderbolt* to the knight of *Italia*.

"I have my heart, my sword, my lance, my battle-axe, each of these is worth a Frenchman. You have them also, so we are on a par."

Montfort ground his teeth with rage, and his eyes rolled fiercely. The knight of the *thunderbolt*, shaking his head, said: "Behold, we have said more than necessary for a joust à *toute outrance*. Knight, if you are as brave as bold, I hope in God we shall have victory: nevertheless I desire that on our side there should be eight also, for though man ought to trust much in himself, yet he must not presume. Now, monseigneur constable, I will bring the other six: their device will be *sable*, a star *or*."

Saying this, without saluting, without bowing, he turned towards the crowd, which wondering stood back to let that giant pass, who in a moment disappeared. The

knight of *Italia*, bending low in a courteous manner to the ladies, who willingly stared at him, also retired.

Having broken the ice, so to say, and roused up Italian valor, there were seen coming forward many other knights, who, with the lances or without them, struck the shields of the challengers, so that by sunset the book of the constable was full of names and descriptions of devices. Montfort, frowning, said not a word; Lebrun closing the book, turned to him, saying: "Do you know, count, what the proverb says?"

"What have I got to do with your proverbs?"

"You will acquire wisdom by them: '*After you offend, kill.*'"

"I have done the first to-day; to-morrow I will do the other."

"I have no doubt of it, if saying it were the same as doing it; but those knights did not look as if they would yield so readily. You will find out that it will take more than two mouthfuls to eat them up."

"That is because sixty years see differently from forty; and you now, lord constable, are more fit to quote proverbs than wield a sword."

Giles Lebrun, a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, hearing that insulting reply, raised his head as in the days of his youth, shook fiercely his hair, snow-white with honorable old age, and thought of striking the insolent in the face. Montfort, however, caring little whether his remark had pleased him or not, had already gone away. Prudence advised Lebrun not to raise any scandal on the present occasion, but revenge impressed the insult in his heart.

On the sixth of January, A.D. 1266, a splendid assemblage of prelates, magistrates and knights, both Italians and French, preceded by the sound of trumpets, presented themselves at the residence of the Count of Provence to conduct him to the Lateran, where the pontiff waited for him. Never did a war horse show so fiercely his internal joy at the sound of the charge, as did now Beatrice at

the sound of those trumpets that announced her approaching coronation. Interrupting hastily her toilet, she rushed impetuously toward the door to go out, although not yet half dressed. Charles took her by the arm, and leading her back to the place whence she had come, with a mild voice said, "Madame, restrain yourself: receiving the crown from the pontiff does not signify to be a queen."

The grand mass was celebrated by Pope Clement, assisted by Rodolphus, Bishop of Albano, Archerius of St. Pressede, Richard of St. Angioló, Godfrey of St. George, and Matthew of St. Mary in Portico, cardinal deacons. The Count and Countess of Provence, dressed in plain white, are kneeling upon rich cushions. After the mass was over, the Cardinals Archerius and Rodolphus accosted Charles, Richard and Godfrey, Beatrice, and led them to the foot of the altar. Clement took the bull of investiture from the altar, and read with a loud voice, "We, Pope Clement IV., servant of the servants of God, by the power delegated to us by Jesus Christ, and by the prince of the apostles, Saint Peter, to provide for the greater glory of the Church committed to our care by the Omnipotent Goodness, ordain that Manfred of Swabia be considered dethroned from the Kingdom of Sicily, its jurisdictions, appurtenances, fiefs, etc., and the sentence of excommunication, pronounced against him by our predecessors, we, by these presents, confirm. We grant the investiture of this same kingdom to our most beloved son, Charles, Count of Provence (excepting the city of Benevento, with all its territory and appurtenances), to his heirs both male and female; but if the males are living, females are excluded; and among the males the first-born is to succeed. Should these fail, or the conditions agreed upon not be fulfilled, then the kingdom is to revert to the Church. The conditions are, that the kingdom shall not be divided; that they shall swear allegiance, homage and fealty to the Church; that if the king is elected emperor, or sovereign of Lombardy or Tuscany, he shall renounce the kingdom within four months; that if the king has completed his eighteenth year, he shall administer himself; if a minor, he shall put him-

self under the tutelage of the Church ; that annually, on the eve of the Saints Peter and Paul, he shall pay a rent of eight thousand ounces of gold, and a *handsome, sound and white* palfrey ; that, at the demand of the pontiff, he shall send as subsidy to the Church three hundred men-at-arms paid for three months, or these be commuted in auxiliary ships ; that the king and his successors shall not interfere in the elections or nominations of prelates, except in the case when it belongs to them, by right of *juspatronato* ; that no tax shall be imposed on the property of the Church ; that they shall hold ready one thousand knights for the Holy Land, etc., etc." *

Charles, who had listened to all these conditions with no intention in his mind of keeping even one of them, majestically replied : " We, Charles of France, by the grace of God Count of Anjou, of Folcacchieri, Provence and Languedoc, King of Sicily, of the Duchy of Apulia, of the Principedom of Capua, do loyal homage to you, Clement Pontiff IV. ; and in your name, to your successors, for the kingdom of Sicily and all the land that is on this side of the strait to the frontiers (excepting the city and county of Benevento, its district and appurtenances), granted to us and to our successors by the aforesaid Roman Church ; we ratify all the conditions expressed in the bull, and promise and swear to observe and to have them observed."

Matthew, cardinal deacon, taking the book of the Gospels, opened it before the count and countess, who placed their right hands over it ; Clement, taking from the altar two royal crimson mantles lined with ermine, handed them to the cardinals, who placed them on the shoulders of Charles and Beatrice ; they, immediately after, kneeling upon the steps of the altar, received from the hands of the pope the holy anointment, and the royal crowns that Cardinal Matthew presented in a silver tray. Bea-

* Many other conditions were added to the above, which we have omitted for brevity. See the original in Giannone's History of Naples.

trice trembled, grew pale, a tear broke forth from her eyes, and fell almost prostrated upon the pavement. Charles, impassible, had his mind turned more than to the present ceremony, to the means of acquiring the kingdom of which he at present had only the crown. The pontiff, having crowned them, let himself also fall on his knees, and raising his arms invoked the Holy Ghost, *Veni Creator Spiritus*; the people replied with tumultuous cheerings; the bells sending forth merry peals announced that the ceremony was ended; the trumpets added to the deafening sounds: "*Long live King Charles!*" "*Long live Queen Beatrice!*" "*Long live the Sovereigns of Sicily!*" And the uproar was such that it seemed as if the church would tumble down; yet, among so many voices that cheered, there was heard a cry which said: "*Death to the foreigner!*" This cry was so terrible and sonorous, that every one turned around, surely imagining to have at his side the man who had dared so much. But, upon the lips of his neighbor there was heard only the last syllable of "*Long live Charles!*" Many suspected that it came from the roof, and raised their eyes upwards; nor did the cry escape the ears of Charles, and it was a death sentence for many thousands of people that he sacrificed afterwards to appease his suspicious mind. Clement, after having finished the prayer, descended from the altar, kissed the king on the forehead, embraced the queen, and then said, "*En uncti Domini et reges estis. Sicut rugitus leonis, ita est terror regis; qui provocat eum peccat in animam suam: sed sicut divisiones aquarum, ita cor regis in manu Domini. Pax vobiscum.*"*

Amidst the applause of the Roman crowd, the new sovereigns returned to the Lateran Palace, where they sumptuously dined; the pontiff sat between them at dinner, but in a more elevated seat, as it behooved his exalted condition. After dinner they proceeded, accom-

* "Behold, you are king and anointed of the Lord. The terror of the king is like the roar of the lion; he who provokes it sins against his own soul; but, like rivers of water, the heart of the king is in the hands of God. Peace be with you!"

panied by the same court of the morning, to the square of St. Paul, which was arranged for the use of tournaments. Here the Roman youth used to exercise daily in certain jousts that were fought with wooden lances, called *bagordi*; and would it had pleased God that in those days our Italy had had wisdom of intellect, as she had strength of arms! It was an oval inclosure, surrounded by a deep ditch four or five yards wide, which on those occasions was filled with water. Towards the farther extremities it was marked by a straight line, and the space between this and the end of the field was used for the sergeants-at-arms, the heralds, the constables, and other officers necessary to this kind of combats. Around the ditch had been raised pavilions adorned with splendid carpets, among which, as every one can imagine, was distinguished that of Charles, for the richness of its golden hangings, and by flags of a thousand colors. Handsome young ladies richly dressed, and with a flush in their faces, sat dignifiedly, anxious for a salute on the part of the fighting knights that might distinguish them. Around the stockade crowded the stupid and fierce rabble, pushing each other to see better; nor were the blows of the halberds of the rough soldiers enough to keep it in order. At a signal from Charles, there was sounded a horn; all the spectators were struck by a thrill of fear and hope; a profound silence ensued all around. It sounded the second time, then the third. Then there were lowered two small bridges at the upper end of the square, and the knights two by two passed over the ditch. Constable Giles Lebrun, standing in the middle of the field, ordered the knights to approach, and swear upon the Evangelists that they would fight honorably, without frauds or *witchcrafts*; that their weapons were not *charmed*, and that they would invoke no other aid than that of God and the most holy Virgin; then he reminded them that they were not to wound the horses. He then apportioned to each party the advantage of the wind and sun; this done, he retired to the extreme right of the field near the pavilion of King Charles, better to receive his orders; and there he remained immovable as

the statue of the *Commendador*. Near him were placed the prizes of the tournament. The other two minor constables, and the heralds, placed themselves at the entrances of the square we have described, near the two bridges. The knights formed in a line opposite to each other and awaited the signal. Giles Lebrun lowered his lance, and the knights rushed to the charge. Shameful to relate, six Italian knights fell unhorsed at the first encounter. Only the knight of the *thunderbolt* and of *Italia* remained in their saddles; but, as if terrified by sudden fear, they turned their horses towards the lists. There rose of a sudden a great burst of laughter as in mockery of the conquered, and a clapping of hands for the conquerors, and such an uproar and stamping of feet as deafened the people. The ladies waved their scarfs; Charles rejoiced in his heart that the reputation of the French arms would be held up by the fear of the Italians.

"Are you an Italian?" asked the knight of the *thunderbolt* of the knight of *Italia*.

"I am."

"And what do you propose to do?"

"Conquer, or die."

"Let us then teach these proud ones, that we two are enough for all of them."

At the same moment they turned the heads of their horses. The spectators, in expectation of new prowess, were silent. Transported by the impetus of their horses, the challengers who first met the enemies' lances were Bilmont and Bresilles: this latter, hit by the knight of *Italia*, is thrown to the ground in a heap; the former is wounded by the knight of the *thunderbolt* by such a blow of the lance, that, breaking his visor, it pierced through to the back of his neck, lifted him from his horse, and hurled him a corpse far from the field. The two Italian knights, lowering again their lances, and continuing their course, met Mirepoix the *Seneschal*, and Jonville the young knight; Mirepoix and his horse are overturned by the spear of the knight of the *thunderbolt*, and the weight of the animal breaks a leg of the fallen knight, who is carried out of the field by the sergeants-at-arms. Jonville,

although borne down by a blow on the helmet till his shoulders touched the back of his horse, his lance dropping from his hand with the pain, yet drew his sword and wanted to recommence the encounter. The knight of the *thunderbolt* spurred his horse upon him, and took aim at his side. Woe to Jonville if he had struck him, for he nevermore would have worn mail or helmet; but the knight of *Italia*, seeing him approach, watched his chance and gave such a blow upon his lance, that, turning it from its aim, it pierced the side of the horse, nor did it stop till it appeared, bloody, on the other side. Jonville staggered at such a blow, and considering his life saved by the courtesy of the knight of *Italia*, delivering him his sword, said, "Sir Knight, your courtesy has conquered me."

"Leave the field, and hold yourself my prisoner *en parole*."

The brothers Vandamme, noble jousts and full of courage, ill brooking that affront, advanced bravely to avenge it. The one who held the black shield with silver drops, strikes the knight of the *thunderbolt*, pierces through his shield, and passes by without being able to withdraw his lance. The knight so hit did not bend an inch from his horse, but missed his blow, which did not hit the body of his adversary; a thing which usually happens to poor jousts, or those out of practice. Inflamed with anger, he seized his iron mace that hung from his saddle, and hurled it with such precision upon the flying Vandamme, that it broke his helmet, steel cap and visor; his head escaped by miracle, only that the impetus of the mace grazed his skin, and carried off some locks of his hair. The knight of the *thunderbolt*, whom victory seemed to have rendered more fierce, rushed upon Vandamme, who, stunned by the blow, half blinded, was staggering on his saddle, seized him by the throat, dragged him from his horse, and then spurred towards the ditch to drown him there. A cry of rage was raised at that act, and Montfort, with l'Etendard, rushed down to save their ill-fated companion. The knight of *Italia* was now more fortunate than before, because, while his adversary, struck by a powerful blow, endeavored, by

strongly pressing his knees, not to lose his stirrups, the straps of his saddle snapped, and he fell headlong to the ground. The horse left to himself, was on the point of running about the field, when the conquering knight seized him by the bit, and courteously led him back to the conquered.

"Sir Knight, dismount, and let us exchange some blows with our swords, since the horse cannot serve me any more, at least for to-day," said Vandamme.

"Sir," replied the knight of *Italia*, "willingly would I do your pleasure, but need calls me elsewhere. I see that my companion is assailed by two knights, and I cannot leave him alone; we brought our challenge *à toute ouytrance* against Montfort, not against you."

"Sir Knight, I cannot acknowledge myself conquered to-day without a condition."

"Name it."

"That you will meet me again to-morrow. Will you promise it?"

"I promise it, if there is no impediment in the way."

After these words the knight of *Italia* rode to the assistance of his companion, who, assailed by Montfort with a heavy blow of the spear on his right shoulder, had been obliged to let go his hold of Vandamme, and lean to the left so far, that if he had not stuck his spear in the ground he would certainly have fallen; but he raised himself so quickly that l'Etendard, having taken too low an aim to strike at him, hit the ground instead. The knight of *Italia* arriving at full gallop, struck l'Etendard on his shoulders so violently, that the latter, smiting with his face on the armor of the horse's neck, received a fearful contusion on the nose, and two or three mails of his visor lodged in the flesh of his cheek. Continuing still on his career he assails Montfort, and breaks his lance on his shield; then drawing his sword, thunders blows on him, and endeavors to keep him at close quarters, so that he may not make use of his lance.

At that moment there happened a wonderful event: the horse of the knight of *Italia*, from being all black, appeared suddenly spotted with large white spots.

"Ah, disloyal knight!" cried Montfort, terrified, "you are *charmed*? Constable!"

"Count, do you intend to cover the shame of your defeat with the errors of the superstitious crowd? Do so if you consider it honorable; but if you come near you can easily perceive that I have painted my horse in order that it may not be recognized, and that the heat has now caused the paint to fall off."

Montfort, after having ascertained the fact, replied:

"However this may be, dismount, Sir Knight, and let us fight on foot."

"As you will, count." They dismounted, and continued the fight more fiercely than before.

The knight of the *thunderbolt*, measuring his distance, fell terribly upon l'Etendard, who, assailed so of a sudden, tumbled from his horse. His enemy, believing him faint, dismounted, and rushed upon him in order to end the battle; but l'Etendard, springing up, drew his sword and defended himself bravely; his blows were as powerful as those of his antagonist, but had not so good an effect on account of the weapons; because the French used quadrangular swords, sharp only in the point, which were more properly called *rapiers*, while the Italians used them sharp on both edges and on the point, and distinguished them by the name of *swords*. Having exchanged many blows that deserve no description, the knight of the *thunderbolt* with the point of his sword struck with such force the enemy's shield, that it pierced it through.

"Sir Knight," he then exclaimed, "I know not whether your shield *will not break by hammering*, but it is *perforated by thrusting*."

L'Etendard replied with a stoccado which, cutting the links of the enemy's hauberk, wounded him slightly on the side, drawing the warm blood.

The wounded knight, throwing away his shield, grasped his sword with both hands, and struck, full of ire, at the head of l'Etendard. The latter, who was well on his guard, hastily protected his head with the shield; the sword fell, cut through the shield, the crest, the helmet,

and would probably have parted his head in two, if the iron with which it was fixed to the hilt had not twisted ; hence its force was stopped by the steel cap. The knight of the *thunderbolt*, seeing his enemy stunned, rushed upon him without loss of time, seized his right hand with his left, and twisted it so strongly that the bones of the arm snapped as if crushed. L'Etendard fainted with the great pain, and let his rapier drop ; the other stepped right over him, and with his right hand still armed with the hilt of his sword, gave him such a heavy blow on the visor, that he felled him again groaning to the ground, then, following up his victory, he drew his poniard, bent over him, cut the leather strap of his visor, and cried to him to surrender. There was no reply ; l'Etendard's face was the color of death, his mouth and nostrils filled with bloody foam, a black rim around his eyes. Two or three times was the knight of the *thunderbolt* tempted to thrust the blade of his poniard into his throat, and raised it to do so ; but afterward, disdaining the act, although the custom of the times did not consider it cowardly, he took away his antagonist's sword, and left him senseless on the field.

"How much better would it have been for you if Godfrey de Presilles had not invented the tournament !" cried Montfort, hitting fiercely the knight of *Italia*. "Resolve better ; do not give so much grief to your lady love, and do not make your mother weep."

"Do you need any assistance ?" said the knight of the *thunderbolt* to his companion, approaching him, and seeing him wounded in two or three places.

The latter did not reply, and, as if he was just fresh for the contest, redoubling his efforts, assails Montfort so furiously, that the latter, with all his art, is hardly able to parry two blows out of three ; aiming terrible sword-thrusts from above, from below, breaks his shield in pieces, knocks in splinters his steel shoulder piece, and wounds him so fearfully on the collar bone, that his arm falls powerless at his side.

"Mark, Montfort, how much better it would have been for you to have *Italy without striking a blow !* And woe

to you, if *all* her warriors would fight!" exclaims the assailant, and presses on him.

Montfort, oppressed by pain, begins to lose ground; at every blow he yields a step; his adversary advancing, steps on the very footprints that he leaves in retreating; the sword of the knight of *Italia*, swift as the tongue of a serpent, now wounds him on the side, now penetrates his visor; he is assailed all over his body with more than human impetus; the thought that his adversary might be *charmed* returns more dreadful than ever to his mind, and has no small share in disheartening him.

"Surrender, or you are dead!" cries the assailant, perceiving Montfort on the edge of the ditch, so that another step would plunge him into it.

"My ancestors never surrendered!"

"That means that they were more valorous than you, not that you should not yield to the strongest: acknowledge yourself defeated."

"Kill me if you have defeated me, but hope not that I will ever say so."

Then the victorious knight, turning his back, retires from the place. Montfort, surprised, looks around and finds himself upon the edge of the ditch. You would not have done this—the voice of his conscience reproached him. Despairing of conquering his adversary, he returns to the contest, in order to die honorably.

The knight of the *thunderbolt*, with his hands upon the pommel of his sword fixed upon the ground, stood motionless, watching the mortal duel. He might have finished it if he had willed it, with only a blow of his sword, but, rejoicing in his companion's valor, he left him all the glory of the victory.

Montfort fell finally prostrated; his adversary pressed him with a foot on his breast, and raising his sword with both hands, rested the point upon the unfastened visor, saying, "Sir Knight, much would it pain me to kill you, for, although proud as Lucifer, I have proved you valiant in arms, and you have done all you could to defend yourself against me. Call yourself defeated, and remember that if Italy does sleep she does not deserve to be

blazoned reversed upon your shield. She sleeps, but if she should awake, what human race can conquer her?"

"Victory has given you the right of killing me, but spare, in God's name, your bitter reproaches; I would have already killed you!" replied Montfort, hardly able to breathe on account of both his physical and moral pains.

"Surrender, and have your life saved."

"No."

"What shall we do with this obstinate man?" asked the victor of the knight of the *thunderbolt*, who calmly replied, "Give him the *coup de grace*."

And he would have done so, had not at once a cry risen from every side, saying, "Stop! stop!" and a noise was heard of the crowd rushing towards them. He lifted his head, and saw that the lists had been stepped over, the ditches crossed, and a number of people were crowding around him.

"What does this mean?" he asked of his companion.

"The Count of Provence," replied he, "has declared him conquered, having ordered Constable Lebrun to raise his lance. Our part is ended; let us go."

"Is it well that we should go off like runaways?"

"I think it is better; these people who surround us love Montfort, and it is not the first time that the reward of the knight conqueror of the tournament has been death by treachery; if you wish to escape, mount your horse and follow me."

The knight, leaving Montfort, who had fainted after pronouncing his last words, mounted his horse, and followed his unknown companion. The latter rode to the place where stood the prizes of the tournament, took up the spear with the armor, and handed it to his companion; then took one of the cups full of gold *bésants*, and threw them to the crowd, that scattered immediately to pick up the coins; this he repeated with the second, the third and the fourth cups, and thus getting rid of them, he rode safely out of that rabble.

It was the honorable Lebrun who, although insulted the day before by Montfort, abhorring an ungenerous

revenge, had saved his life. Charles, at his repeated entreaties, had finally ordered him to raise the spear, which the constable did very willingly, and then anxiously advanced with the sergeant-at-arms to relieve Montfort, whom they found senseless on the ground, and carefully conveyed to his lodgings.

The knights of *Italia* and of the *thunderbolt*, although riding very fast, were soon overtaken by their other six companions, whom, having remained prisoners at first, the success of the tournament had set free. Thus, all joined together, they rode into the deepest recesses of a neighboring forest. They had hardly proceeded a thousand steps, when they met about two hundred men-at-arms, who from afar saluted them with their swords and partisans. The knight of the *thunderbolt*, approaching near, lowered his visor, and said, "Companions, we have conquered."

CHAPTER XIII.

REMORESE.

For no night has followed day, nor day the night, that, mingled with the cry of the new-born has not been heard the weeping of death and funerals.—LUCRETIVS, II.

TS it you, Sir Ghino? My heart had already revealed it to me," exclaimed the knight of *Italia*, lowering his visor in his turn, at which Ghino with open arms ran towards him, crying, "You here, Prince Rogiero?" and they embraced and kissed each other with much affection.

"But how, Sir Knight," resumed Ghino, "from being so friendly with France, have you so quickly become an enemy?"

"You must know, Sir Ghino, that when I took the letters from Naples to the Countess Beatrice on the

banks of the Oglio, Montfort, in a passion, cried out : 'Good heavens ! we shall have Italy *without striking a blow !*' Now I hope he has learned that woe to him if the Italians did strike !" . . .

"What presumption ! and he has not yet conquered. Think how proud they will be when they are actual masters of Naples ! . . . Oh, if our own patriots ! . . . But come now, Sir Knight, for you must be tired and wounded, and I myself never came so near sinking under my armor as to-day. By the help of God we have performed exploits enough for one day."

Thus they walked on towards a little house situated very deep in the forest, where Ghino for the second time received Rogiero as a guest.

When Rogiero, by a few days' rest and care, had nearly recovered from the wounds which he had received, it happened that one day, Ghino being absent on business connected with his troop, he went out alone into the forest. His arms were crossed, his head bent ; he walked sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, lost in thought. The remembrance of past events assailed his mind, at first with a feeling of sadness, then with a painful irritation, finally with an excess of rage ; then he rushed forward, thrusting his hands in his hair, wretched in appearance, his eyes glaring, shouting and cursing like a creature afflicted by a demon. Bathed in perspiration, he leaned against the trunk of a tree, and panting from fatigue and grief, cried aloud, "Who denies that there is a destiny ? Let him who denies it come and behold the fearful sentence that condemns me to infamy ; and if he has the heart let him say that there is no such thing as destiny. See, to whichever side I turn, there is only crime,—crime if I remain inactive, crime if I act. My father's blood cries from the tomb, . . . should I shut my heart and ears . . . it will remain in accusation against me before the throne of God, as a disgrace in the sight of men. . . . Let me avenge it ! How ? Challenge King Manfred to single combat ? . . . Fool !—those even who feel most deeply the justice of my cause, would cast upon me the imputation of madness ; I should have sacri-

ficed myself uselessly. I should leave to my descendants only a new crime to retaliate. Call in the stranger against him? . . . My father's death will be avenged, but my country oppressed!—Strike him in secret? That would be the best. . . . But then men, no one knows why, call that treachery. Alas! I see the scorn of the nation, like some hideous monster, preparing to destroy my reputation. I see crowding before my mind present and future sins; but mine stands out from the multitude in glaring colors. I see my name as a metal plate riveted in the memory of posterity, made more conspicuous by my efforts to destroy it, and attracting the attention of ages. This is the greatest torment; but the end of torment, death. If life is a gift, I renounce it; I would have renounced it, had my reason foreknown what life is, and had the choice of existence been presented to me. If it be a punishment, how have I deserved it? Why should I be doubly afflicted for not bearing the punishment? That is not justice! Justice! dared I utter such a word in the presence of the powerful one? If Heaven had endowed him with a compassionate heart, he would send for a physician to see if my mind were sound. I have protected my life from hunger, thirst, cold, from 'all the ills that flesh is heir to;' but from infamy I have not been able to protect it. If it was sin to destroy it, it was dishonor to keep it. Between dishonor and sin I have chosen the latter: if I ought to have chosen the former, why was it not pointed out to me? Why was such horror of dishonor given me? Why was there imparted to my fellow beings a fierce will to persecute the fallen? Why should it be a sin? If a body be square or round, does it serve less the purpose for which it was intended? Nothing of humanity is lost; matter returns to matter. The spirit? Is it not trial enough to conquer the desire for life instilled into our blood; not pain enough, the unspeakable anguish of disturbing the order of our actual existence? If it is permitted to kill another who wishes to do me harm, why should I not kill myself to escape it? What is this life that it is worth preserving? The world offers but two paths to the living—criminal or victim. For the first,

my soul is too little to despise fame, and him who confers it; for the second, too great to bear it like a coward. Hitherto, every moment has been pain, every day a grief; now, every year is about to be a crime."

And thus he would certainly, in his excited mood, have repeated all the opinions advanced by the Abbot of San Cirano, Robeck, Rousseau, Goethe, Ugo Foscolo, and innumerable others, in favor of suicide, and perhaps would have ended by committing it,—an argument which does not admit of reasoning on the other side,—if a sonorous voice had not sounded in his ears, crying, "*Remember your father.*" Rogiero sprang up, looked around in alarm, and searched in all directions. Not a trace, not a vestige of a human being. Now indeed he is nearly distracted, and if the sentences that had just fallen from him were in part fragments of wisdom, in part wicked, as his fierce passion suggested, think what they would be after this event.

"Who denies that there is a destiny? Here am I, overwhelmed by the delirium of desperate love, surrounded by the meshes of crime, from which I cannot escape. I groan under the weight of chains, which I have not power to break. My pulses drop blood, and it is vain to struggle: let me be quiet, let me await the fulfilment of my destiny, and suffer in silence. Behold the abyss of tears, of remorse, of anger: I would walk on sharp iron to avoid it, but an irresistible power drags me into it.—Whence comes this cursed power? From hell or heaven? I know not; I do not wish to know. The power lives and rules, and I am condemned to fall headlong. Oh! if it were granted to me to demand the reason! If the power were mine to rush with the elements!"

And here Rogiero became perfectly frantic. Transported by fury, he sped through the forest like one attacked by that frightful disease called Lycanthropy,* and

* Lycanthropy, from the Greek. A kind of madness, in which the sufferer runs through the country by night, howling like a wolf; and sometimes bites and gnashes his teeth like a dog: whence it has also been called Cynanthropy.

from time to time gnashed his teeth, crying, "Tyrant! tormentor of souls! may all nature perish!" and many other such things. Pursuing his headlong course, blind both in mind and body, he suddenly heard some one cry out in advance of him, "Stop, man! if you do not wish to enter the grave before your time."

Rogiero, recalled to his senses, saw himself upon the brink of an open grave. In a line with it were many others, dug in the same field, also open, as if to be more ready to engulf the race destined to die. The words had been uttered by an old friar, who looked as if he had not opened his lips, so absorbed was he in digging his own last resting-place. I am well aware that the science of Lavater, of discovering the hidden thoughts of the mind from the external forms of the countenance, is very uncertain; nevertheless we are so made, that we stop to look at the glass before we drink its contents. Let us, however, study human countenances as much as possible; not that they can teach us wisdom, but because they teach us to doubt, and doubt is all that is granted to mortals. The friar seemed more than ninety years old: his figure appeared to have been formerly as majestic and upright as the pines that surrounded his holy abbey; but now age had bent him towards the earth which he was then opening with his own hand to receive him, on the not far distant day of his death. Courteous were the motions of his lip, his smile, his gestures: his voice was deep and solemn: his eyes flashed a fire which seemed eternal, for neither years, nor watchings, nor tears, had been able to dim, far less extinguish it. Michael Angelo, if he had wished to paint the Eternal Father, would have copied his awfulness; Raphael, to portray the Redeemer, would have taken his gentleness for a model. Rogiero, feeling a little comforted by the beauty of his aspect, although somewhat ashamed, said to him: "Holy Father, if the question is not impertinent, why are your hands employed in so humble a labor?" The falling of the snow, and the crumbling of the earth, will constantly fill this grave, which, on the day of your death, might be finished in a

few hours by any one. It seems to me that your time might be better employed."

"My son," replied the friar, planting his spade in the ground, and resting his chin on his hands, upon the handle of it, in a grave manner, "you would have spoken wisely, if so trifling were the object of my labors. But know that the intention of our glorious founder was far different when he ordered this daily task. It is true that the custom has nearly died out among the monks of this monastery, and I am now almost the only one who constantly follows it. Let man consider that his body must become two or three clods of earth and a myriad of insects, and if his implacable passions do not become perfectly still, they will at least become calmer. By our conformation, we are such that, requiring pleasure, we fly in alarm not only from grief, but from toil. Now consider whether our thoughts would willingly turn to the contemplation of death, which is the greatest of griefs: we must compel them to it with constant effort. Truly time would be better employed in some great work, but opportunities for great works occur but seldom, and it is well that it is so; and while awaiting them, what study is more advantageous than that which teaches us the weakness of our nature, and warns us that all conditions are equal in the scale of death, and that perhaps a better earth is formed from the limbs of a man, strengthened by constant toil, and preserved by temperate food, than from the weakened body of him who has lived in luxury? Oh, my son! it is no vain labor to turn the earth in which we are to be buried."

"I should have thought that repeating the labor every day would have long since habituated man to it, and his dread would remain as it was before he commenced. But, my father, what is life, that so much preparation is required to finish it? If a man, for weariness, or for grief, or for any other reason, wishes for death, without thinking, he plunges his sword into his breast, then, in the moment between the wound and death, his spirit will look upon it as an act of its own will, and will enjoy the flattering idea that it has the power to destroy its body: but,

thinking upon it, we learn that it is necessary, inevitable, that the effort of our fortitude merely hastens it by a few moments; everything is reduced to meanness, misery, cowardice. For Heaven's sake, let us not think of death, for it afflicts us with too great sorrow: let us take it, if necessary, without thinking of it."

"Ah!" cried the friar, striking his hand upon his forehead, "you disclose to me a terrible secret. Perhaps this labor, which hitherto I have looked upon as the offspring of my own courage, is a tribute that age, shaking the vigor of my spirit, compels me to pay to weakness. In former times I learned that man shows himself weak in everything; but the evil one has taken me by surprise, and pride has deluded me with the flattery that my work was a magnanimous one. Still, I do not fear death."

"Nor do I fear it: I even seek it as a hidden treasure, but cannot find it: I long for it as a compensation for life, and it is not granted to me. Why is there not, in the midst of a life of trials, a spot where we may rest? Why, amidst so much grief, is there no asylum of peace?"

The friar was silent. Rogiero remained for some time absorbed in thought. Looking around he perceived a solemn solitude, a blessed silence, broken only by the rustling of the distant leaves or by the voice of the wandering larks, which, with swift curve, flew over the graveyard. His blood, cooled, flowed more calmly in his veins, his pulses beat more gently, his breath came more freely.

"Oh, here indeed reigns peace!" he exclaimed with a sigh.

The friar was silent.

"If," continued Rogiero, "if the cry of vengeance would not reach the altar of the Lord; if the praises of God would banish that voice from my ears; if the shade of the dead could not enter the sanctuary . . ."

"Certainly it will not, unless you yourself carry it there."

"I? When I would hide myself under the earth to escape it!"

"Have you committed a crime?"

"No."

"Are you about to commit one?"

"Yes."

"And what do you wish of the Lord?"

"That He would save me from a power that urges me to sin."

"What power? Man, say,—I will—and you can."

"Oh, friar, friar, you are incredulous; but by night and day I am condemned to hear the voice of my betrayed father."

"What does he require?"

"A crime."

"Beyond this," replied the friar, pointing to the grave, "there is only pardon; all that you relate is an illusion of your own spirit, disposed to do evil."

"If it were so, could the House of God cure me?"

"It could."

"Father, I will become a friar."

"Because there is silence there," replied the old man, indicating the abbey with his glance, "do you think that all is peace within? Do you not know that despair is silent? Do you not know that tears are consumed, but not the anguish that causes them to be shed? The threshold of the convent is not a wall, that can protect you from the passions of the world. If you bring them there, there you will find them; if you bear crime there, you will find remorse; if wishes, longing. Some have lived, who, deceived by the appearance of this retirement, or rather trusting too much to it, cast down by some misfortune, angry but not satiated with the world, have donned the dress of our order, but have not assumed its spirit; then gradually, their desires awaking in them with greater force than ever, irritated at the difficulties of success, either from weak they become wicked, or wear out their lives in passion; and none of these have saved their souls. In the silence of these walls, deeds of sin are buried. It is sufficient, if you wish to be happy, to lay aside every desire of glory, every hatred, every love; you will be as one dead, as one never born; your virtues will pass away unknown, the applause of men, the crown of wisdom or of power, will appear to your fancy as vanity;

the only reality the earth that will cover you ; and you will go down to death, unknown, uncared for, like a drop of rain falling into the ocean."

"Father, do not repulse me from the sanctuary of God."

"I repulse you ? Oh, if my head could be a stepping-stone for you to reach celestial joys, I would lay it thousands and thousands of times in the dust, thanking Eternal Wisdom for having allotted it such a lofty destiny. But I am a sinner ; it cannot be granted me to raise a soul from the path of perdition and to obtain its salvation. No, it cannot be granted. Who knows but what, by inviting you to taste the comforts of religion, I should be instrumental in your ruin ; some may be lost as friars who as knights would have been saved : at all events, it is necessary to think well of the end."

While he was speaking, a bell of the abbey began to toll : the friar raised his eyes to Heaven, and prayed fervently, "May it please Thee, O Lord, to pardon the soul of the poor brother Egidio." Then turning to Rogiero : "Hear, my son, this bell warns us that a soul is passing. Poor brother Egidio !. It is not yet eight months since he first assumed the cowl, and he has so weakened himself with fasts and discipline, that his body could not bear up under them. Assuredly he was a great sinner, but the mercy of the Eternal is greater than the sin, and he will certainly be saved. I found him, like you, on the way, and led him in, but his face appeared very different from yours ; his voice, his words, different ; now he is dying. Who is brother Egidio ? No one knows ; no one weeps for him. From your flashing looks I see that you could not endure such oblivion ; your eyes show a passion that must break forth ; there is no power that can restrain it ; if stopped, it will return to break your heart. I do not know whither it will lead you, but I am certain that if you became a friar it would be to cast yourself into eternal flames before the time. The peace of God be with you."

"Cruel man !" cried Rogiero, "you wish me peace, and will not hold out your hand to help me ; you drive

me from the place where I would seek safety, telling me that that is not the way; but you do not point out any other. But look down once upon thy creature, Almighty God! I will go and prostrate myself before His altar; I will implore Him, beseech Him. All that man can do, will I do, that He may listen to me, and answer."

Thus saying, he slowly followed the friar, and, reaching a little door, pushed it open, passed through a corridor, and found himself in a room on the ground floor. Ascending a staircase at the end of the room, he arrived at the first floor, and after spending some time in vainly searching for a friar to direct him to the chapel, he found himself beside a door, through which he heard the subdued voice of some one reciting the prayers for the dying. He opened the door and stopped on the threshold. —The setting sun, hidden behind a thick mist, tinged with a blood-red glow an overhanging cloud, which reflected in a fearful manner its lurid hue upon the objects beneath: it penetrated through the small window, and illuminated the face and breast of a dying man. Disabled by his illness, or by some other cause, from lying down, he was seated, propped up by a folded mattress; his right hand lay uncovered upon the bed, motionless. The tips of the fingers were purple, but the rest of the hand was white, as if already dead; the left hand was concealed by the sheet. At his left, upon the mattress, was placed a crucifix, but the dying man kept his head averted, as if to avoid the sight of it. From time to time he opened his eyes, now dim and of a leaden hue, now bright as glass; but wandering, not fixed on anything, evidently seeing nothing, like those of one blind with *gutta serena*; his hair, pushed back from his face, showed the stamp of death impressed upon his forehead; from his compressed lips oozed a black foam, which dropped down upon his beard: he gasped painfully for breath. The rest of the scene—the clothing that covered his feet, the friar, who, kneeling at the foot of the bed, recited the holy prayers—was lost in obscurity.

Rogiero entered noiselessly. Why does he grow pale? Why does his heart almost cease to beat? He ap-

proaches ; he bends down towards the dying man. Great Heavens ! Roberto ! ”

The dulled senses of the expiring one answer as if unwillingly to the call. He raises his eyes and looks at the knight. Suddenly his blood flowed quickly through his veins ; his hair rises on end ; his trembling shakes the bed ; with a frightful cry he exclaims : “ The betrayed ! The betrayed ! Father, you have deceived me : why did you tell me that God had forgiven my sins ? Do you not see that He rends the stones of the tomb and sends the dead to bid me despair in my last moments. ”

“ They are illusions of the evil one, my brother ; fix your mind upon the image of the Redeemer. ”

Roberto, seeing the friar near him, clung to him in terror, and hid his face in his bosom, uttering brokenly : “ Behold him ! there, . . . there, . . . on the other side of the bed. . . For Jesus’ sake, sprinkle some holy water upon him, . . . drive him away ; . . . my thoughts cannot dwell upon Paradise unless he is away ? ”

The friar, who, absorbed in the holy duties of his office, had not observed Rogiero’s entrance, looked keenly into the darkness and perceived a knight. A shudder, though slight, passed over his frame ; but, reassured by his trust in divine aid, he began :

“ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I conjure thee. ”

“ Father, I am no ghost that you should conjure me. ”

“ Do not heed him, father, do not heed him ; continue to exorcise him ; do you not see that he is trying to deceive you, that he may remain ? ”

“ Unhappy one ! Roberto, do you not know my voice ? ”

“ Oh ! that I had never heard it ! ”

“ The last time that I parted from you, I pressed your hand, and we promised each other that if we ever met again in this world, we would look upon each other as friends ; do you now receive me thus ? Banish all fear ; feel, I am alive. ” And so saying, he laid his hand affectionately upon Roberto’s arm.

“ It burns me, . . . Father, it burns me. . . . Throw

some holy water upon him, . . . holy water. . . . I can bear no more. . . . Drive him away, or I shall die cursing."

"Son, do not utter such words ; thank God, the knight before you is living."

"Living ?"

"Yes, living. Adore the eternal decrees ; perhaps he was sent to gladden your dying moments by his forgiveness."

"He is living !" cried the expiring man, and loosing his clasp upon the friar's neck, he took Rogiero's hand, and with the deepest anxiety touched it many times, as if to assure himself that he was not deceived. "He is living !" and lifted it to his lips, and burst into a flood of tears.

"But cheer up, Roberto ! take courage, do not weep so ; many greater sinners than you have obtained forgiveness, and with less bitter repentance."

Roberto, still holding Rogiero's hand, looks into his face, and in a piteous voice entreats, "Forgiveness ; forgiveness !"

"You have never done me any harm, Roberto ; why should I forgive you ?"

"Oh, my crimes are infinite, and I need all the power of hope to keep me from despairing of forgiveness, and all the mercy of God to forgive them ; I have sinned against the innocent—against you—for I have betrayed you."

"Why have you betrayed me ? What had I done to you ?" asked Rogiero, in a voice that would have softened the hardest heart. "Then injuring no one is not enough to make one safe ?"

"But—I have betrayed you !"

"Oh ! courteous knight, if your spirit is as gentle as your face, you will not permit this soul to depart, uncomforted by your forgiveness ; he has injured you, but his penitence has expiated his sin, and he is about to appear before the judgment-seat of the Almighty."

"Good father, I do not remember any injury that this man has done me ; but since he says that he has betrayed me, I forgive him. Injury, as you know, can be

cancelled only in two ways : revenge or forgiveness. The first is impossible, the second alone remains to me. I forgive him."

"Father, you heard ; he forgives me."

"Yes, be of good cheer ; man has forgiven you : think if God will not, who is so much more merciful than man ?"

"*Amen.*"

"Roberto, I beseech you, tell me how you have betrayed me."

"Why should I not tell you ? Oh ! that the whole universe were here to listen to my confession, and see how great a sinner I have been in the sight of the Lord. Thus my submission might induce Him to look upon me with mercy in this most bitter hour of my death, and would atone for my sins :—but no, for you might withdraw your forgiveness and repent of having given it to me, and curse me forever—no, I will not tell you how I betrayed you."

"Roberto, I am more accustomed to misfortune than you would believe ; you cannot tell me anything that I have not imagined or felt ; I have long been prepared for any event. Speak ; I promise not to retract my forgiveness."

"You swear it ?"

"I swear it."

"Father, I beseech you, receive his oath."

Rogiero placed his right hand upon the crucifix and repeated what the father chose to dictate.

"Then you cannot now break your promise, Rogiero ?" asked Roberto, and Rogiero replied by an assenting gesture. "Then come here and sit near me on the side of the bed ; I will speak low, for my strength is failing, and it may not be sufficient to end my confession. Rogiero, you will hear the story of a crime which is too great to admit of either tears or cries ; tears would freeze on your eyelids, cries would stifle in your throat. Why do you grow pale, Rogiero ? Oh, it is not time yet ! If you are not brave now, I swear to you that you will die before I end."

Rogiero, placing his hand in Roberto's that he might feel that it did not tremble, said :

"Speak on."

CHAPTER XIV.

EXTREME UNCTION.

Posta s'era a seder sopra il suo letto
 La miserella vinta dal dolore,
 Ed avea nelle braccia
 Il figliuol pur mo' nato :
 Questo, disse, è quel latte
 Che ti può dare il petto
 Di tua madre infelice, e trapassata
 Ogni cosa bruttando col suo sangue
 Finì la vita.

CANACE, *Tragedia Antica.*

O'ercome with grief, the wretched one
 On the bedside her woes sat ruing,
 Within her arms her new-born son.
 "In vain for food my child is suing ;"
 All things around with blood imbruing,
 His hapless mother's life is done.

M. G. M.



T was a winter night ; gathered around the hearth, we listened to the wild tale told us by the steward. Often affected by an unusual tremor, I leaned against my neighbor, and as if from affection, pressed his hand, but in reality because I was afraid. Certainly the story of the steward was frightful, and the fire was beginning to die away, and the shadows to grow heavier ; but I felt within me a disturbance which could not have been caused by those things. I have since heard derided these secret intinuations, by which an internal power seems to warn us of some impending misfortune ; but I have never suffered any affliction which my

heart has not predicted. That evening was destined for the commencement of my crimes.

"A light touch on my shoulder made me look round. The face of Count Odrisio di *Sanguine* had always been stern, this evening it was terrible ; it may have been the effect of the red light of the dying embers, which reflected upon his wrinkled features that strange expression ; perhaps it came from the thought of what he was plotting in his mind. At the sight of those white hairs standing on end around his pale face, his black eyebrows contracted painfully, the wan and faded hue of his usually ruddy cheeks, I was about to cry out ; but he opened wide his eyes, before half-closed, and by their angry flash and expression, gave me to understand that I must be silent ; then bending over the back of the seat, he whispered softly in my ear : ' Follow me, but let no one perceive your departure ; ' and went away as he came. Eager to obey my master, I drew back a little from the hearth ; the light no longer shining upon me, my companions took no more notice of me ; under cover of the darkness, I arose and left the room.

"I had hardly passed half way down the corridor, when the baron's voice asked : ' Is that you, Roberto ? '—' It is I.'—' Tell me, Roberto, how do you esteem your master ? '—' As wise, kind, and courteous.'—' Truly ? '—' As the mass.'—' The saints forbid that I should question you, to remind you of your obligations to me, but how do you think I have treated you ? '—' As a father does a beloved son.'—' Truly ? '—' On the faith of a vassal.'—' Then if I should ask a favor of you, would you grant it ? '—' My master, all that a man can, I would give for you and yours, except my soul's salvation.'—' Have you a cuirass ? '—' No, my master.'—' A dagger ? '—' Yes, my master.'—' I ask of you only the death of a man.'—' By treachery ? '—' Just as you like, so long as you kill him ; but . . . now that I think of it, by treachery would be best.'—' My master, it is for you to command ; it is all the same to me.'—' Well then, Roberto, an hour before day-break, I want you to be on the right-hand terrace of the castle, on the side that looks towards the garden.'

'My master, I beg your pardon, but which of the two terraces do you mean by the right-hand one?'—'The right . . . the right coming from the 'avenue of pines.' 'If I understand, you mean the one which is under the room of my lady your daughter?'—'Yes;' and he uttered the word with effort, with a groan of sorrow. 'Then an hour before day-break be on the terrace, watching, with your dagger in your hand; you will hear some one descend; wait till he is near the ground, then . . . 'A good strong blow in the back, my master?'—'Yes. . . . I will come immediately, we will dig a grave; . . . no one will know anything about the deed but you.'—'It will be buried in my heart, as his body in the earth.'—'I hope so, though the thing is not worth it, for it is only a robber, who for several nights has been trying to steal the treasure of my family, and perhaps . . . '—'Yes, my master, . . . '—'Still, as you love me, be careful to keep it a secret; good-night, Roberto.' 'The Lord preserve you, my master.'

"I returned to the hall, where the other vassals were still listening with the greatest attention to the steward's legend, and, unperceived, I reseated myself by the fire; there, covering my face, I began to think, What is the need of this? It seems to me that it cannot be a robber, for the count would have disposed his servants so as to prevent his escape, and thus taken him alive, and killed him at his leisure. It must be some secret lover whom his daughter . . . Oh! would it not be better to fulfil the wish of those loving ones, than to stain his aged hands with blood? But perhaps it is a married man; perhaps a youth of lower rank; it may be even one of his own vassals; perhaps he is now at my side! I turned, and saw near me an old falconer nearly blind from age, and, reassured, I resumed my train of thought. Will the dust into which my master's body will resolve itself be golden? Can he trace his lineage further back than Adam? Should I kill by treachery a man to whom I perhaps have sworn brotherhood? And thus wandering from thought to thought, my mind was so withdrawn from all that was taking place before my eyes, that when I recalled my

scattered senses, I perceived that my companions had left me alone, and had gone to rest without calling me. Feeling my way, I went to the garden.

"I had been lying in wait about an hour, although my impatience made it seem like a whole night, when I heard a slight noise ; I peered into the gloom, and saw a black figure suspended in the air ; I unsheathed my dagger, drew near, and when I thought him just within reach, gave a desperate blow. Fortunately for the unknown, he had thought it well, when about five feet from the ground, to let himself fall at once, so that my dagger smote the wall, with such force as to strike fire ; woe to him if it had reached him, for it would certainly have pierced him through. I do not know how it happened : perhaps the unknown held his sword between his teeth ; but I was immediately attacked in a most furious manner. We exchanged a few blows, but overcome by his strength and superior skill, I dropped my dagger, and receiving a blow full on the head, I fell to the ground. I remember, although half stunned, that the window over the terrace opened, and the bare arm of a woman, holding a light, appeared, then a face as pale as death. A sharp cry was heard ; ' Let me die with him ! ' Then another voice within said, ' Holy Virgin ! What are you doing, my sweet lady ? You are mad ! . . . My lady, perhaps he is safe.' A distant voice in affirmation exclaimed, ' I am safe ! ' While I was trying to rise to my feet, I heard hasty steps coming towards me, and the voice of the baron, asking, ' Where is the body ? ' ' He would not be killed, my master, and ran away after half killing me.' The baron broke forth into curses, and went away in a rage.

"He hid himself from every one : shut up in his room, for a whole week he neither said nor did anything, except to send for a certain Rinaldo d'Aquino, Count di Caserta, formerly very intimate at the castle, and who, the servants said among themselves, was a rejected suitor of my Lady Spina. At the end of the week, the vassals were ordered to prepare for the nuptials of the baron's daughter, which were to take place on the following day. Although accus-

tomed to execute his commands without comment or hesitation, this hasty resolution seemed to us extraordinary, and we dared to say so to each other, and even to suspect that it was against my lady's will. She seldom appeared among us, but we always hailed her beautiful presence with a smile, and sighed when she departed : she appeared an angel among demons ; conscious that prayers from our lips would not be acceptable, we often begged her to pray for us ; we held her as a link between our souls and paradise. No prayer was proffered by a more fair or a more good creature, and perhaps more acceptable. . . . ' Ah ! father, do you believe that my sin has been really forgiven ? ' said the dying Roberto to the friar, who stood beside his bed comforting him. This one replied, ' May you have the faith of hope in believing yourself forgiven, as certainly as your sins have been remitted you ! Do you think that mercy is less powerful than sin ?—Look on your Redeemer : He holds His arms open to embrace all that have recourse to Him : has God ever repulsed any sinner ? Have trust, have trust in God.'

" ' I will have trust in God, for there remains nothing else for me to do,' resumed the sick man, and devoutly approached the crucifix to his lips. ' I remember it, as if it was now,' resumed Roberto, continuing the story, ' for I was near by when she kneeled before the altar : she trembled with convulsive shudders that might have escaped looks less curious or less affectionate than mine ; her nuptial veil, spangled with gold, covered her face, yet I was sure she wept ;—her bosom heaved so under her dress from time to time, that it seemed as if it would burst ; still, you could not hear a sigh, but a heavy breathing, like that of the diver when he takes breath before diving under the water. Scandal might have found her form rather fuller than usual in a maiden ; . . . perhaps I did not see right ; . . . at any rate I suspected so at the time. We had reached that terrible moment, in which the priest demands of the pair kneeling before him the sacrifice of all the passions, thoughts, sighs, in favor of one only creature in this world, in which he binds the souls with that chain whose links death only

holds in its hand. She opened her veil and looked at her father, and the father looked back at her. . . . Holy Virgin ! What looks ! That of Lady Spina seemed the quivering flight of a swallow fallen from its nest before its feathers have grown,—anxious to see and yet afraid to meet the object of its search ; it revealed a desperate resignation for the loss of something more than earthly,—it begged for pity. That of Count Odrisio was at first benevolent, and, if I mistook it not, a mist of tears began to issue from the inferior cavity of the eye. All of a sudden it gleamed like an infernal lightning : who knows but the evil spirit passed through it in that moment ? He remained immovable, with an expression of bitter reproach, of profound anger, and yet entreating for mercy : my soul felt then, but could not repeat now, the sensations that agitated it. The fatal consent was forced from her pale lips, the blessing given ; I heard both the consent and the blessing like the sound of the axe upon the block after having severed the head. I rushed away from the chapel : that wedding was not a happy one. The next morning we found Count Odrisio dead in his bed ; we mourned for him as for a man who had done us neither good nor harm. . . . Count Rinaldo came to live in the castle, and for us vassals the marriage only changed the coat-of-arms. . . . If whilst Count Odrisio lived we seldom set our eyes on Lady Spina, now she had become quite invisible : one month after the fatal marriage I saw her cross the gratings of the chapel ; her eyes were red and swollen, the rest of her face pale, her lips violet ; her skin sunk into the bones ; I signed me with the sign of the cross in pity for her, for if death might not be frightful upon the face of beauty, illness certainly is. And Count Rinaldo ? He also had been a very handsome man, fond of hunting, of tournaments, and of every other knightly exercise ; now, disordered in his person, he wandered through the pine lanes, wailing with painful exclamations, and losing every day the fairness of his face, the color of his cheeks ; the horses idling in the grass of the fields, the dogs crouching in the yard or near the fire-place, the falcons resting on their perches : nothing availed to

cheer him from his mortal gloom, neither the frequent visits that King Manfred paid him, nor the office of constable, the very first in the kingdom, to which he was raised about that time. The servants, following the moods of their masters, went about with their heads low, without even saluting each other. It was a house full of gloom, predestined to misfortune.

“Retiring late one night to my little room, I felt an inclination to pass near the apartment of the count: hardly had I placed my foot on the threshold of the hall, than I heard a sound of persons speaking. I approached softly, listening: the wind that night blew so hard, that the words could not reach me in full; notwithstanding I stood listening: ‘Count Odrisio, you have betrayed me! had I the power, your soul would not have rest under the earth;’ . . . the wind carried off what followed; when it slackened blowing, I heard from a different voice: ‘irreparable . . .’ and the force of the wind prevented me from hearing further. ‘She got out of bed,’ added the first voice, that seemed to me that of Count Rinaldo. ‘I was awake, but pretended to sleep . . .’ and then a new interruption: ‘I rose before her, found the letter, and read: ‘Your wonder, prince, at my obstinate repugnance to betray my marriage vow is very offensive to me, but it is deserved; for the woman who has betrayed her first duty can betray her second, and all . . . nor do I complain of it, for I consider it one of the lightest of the punishments with which Eternal Justice makes me atone for my father’s death: happy if . . .’ a blast of wind snatched away the last words; and after that, what with the shaking of the windows and the whistling of the wind through the hall, I could not hear, except now from Count Rinaldo, now from the other voice, these broken sentences: ‘He might have taken my life, not my honor, . . . that child will never carry the escutcheon of Aquino . . . it was a deception: . . . a crime . . . you have only to say the word . . . I will think of the rest . . . it is all over . . . the dead do not speak . . .’ I withdrew cautiously, because I thought they were coming towards my way; the adventure of the night when I was defeated, the

altered figure, the hastened marriage of Lady Spina, had revealed to me a great deal, but much more the words which I had just heard. One evening, while I was going all alone towards the gate of the castle to see whether it was well shut, I met a certain Count della Cerra, who, being rather in reduced circumstances, often came to the castle of my lord, and had ingratiated himself so much in his good-graces, that he had made him the recipient of all his secret thoughts. 'Vassal,' said he, 'what would you do to obtain your liberty?'—'What would I do? say yourself what would I do, for, for my part, I don't know it myself.'—'A very little service is required of you, which your master could command of you, but which he prefers to beg of you, and in recompense he offers you your liberty, and a comfortable estate.'—'And what is it?'—'A poniard thrust.'—'I have given hundreds to my loss; imagine if I would not give one to my profit.' 'But mark, it must be given to one asleep, with great caution, in the dark, having nothing else with you but your poniard.'—'Is it not a question of killing a man? the poniard is all that is required; . . . would that make any difference with you?'—'Not for me, Roberto, but for you who are accustomed to use your arms, as it behooves a *loyal* man.' 'If I fight in the day-time, that is no reason why I would not more willingly fight in the night; and if I strike on the breast, it is no reason I would not strike better on the back; when I can go by the level road, I choose neither the ascent nor the precipice.'—'Well said, vassal: then hold yourself ready for to-morrow evening at this hour, and I will conduct you to the spot.'—'But,' continued I, 'my good sir, I cannot obey you without the certainty that the baron will enfranchise me from the servitude in which I was born.'—'Vassal, would you doubt the faith of your baron?'—'Not that of my baron, but . . . '—'Whose?'—'Yours.'—'And what reason have you, vassal, to distrust me?'—'And what reason have I to trust you?'—'Do you not see me riding daily by the side of your baron? do you think that I would ask you to do anything that he had not ordered me?'—'Is the race of traitors now totally ex-

tinct?'—At this point I noticed the count's eyes flash fire and his cheeks redden, but he dared not show himself angry, for I had the reputation of being bloodthirsty, and he feared much.—'Very well; not to have any more words about it, what do you desire that I should bring as a token of your master's will?'—'I do not know: you mention something.'—'Say his signet ring?'—'That would be sufficient, my master.—'Then meet me here to-morrow at the same hour, and I will bring it.'—There was no gainsaying it; I saw his very signet-ring; I looked at it, turned it over and over to see whether there was any deception; it was really his ring.—'You tremble?' said Count della Cerra, when, after having made me go over a long distance with eyes bandaged, he led me into a subterranean passage.—'Yes, I tremble, but with cold.'—'Sometimes one trembles also for fear.'—'Yes, . . . but it is easily discerned when one trembles for fear or for cold.'—'This we shall prove now, for we are at the place.'—He took away my bandage; I was surrounded by darkness, . . . darkness, meet company of crime.—'Now you must try to descend by this opening very noiselessly, it is only two feet from the ground; put down one leg first, then another; then move three steps to the right, and you will find yourself near a bed, where sleeps . . .—'Who sleeps?'—'What matters to you to know who sleeps there? your business is only to finish him.'—'What matters to me? it matters a great deal: might he not be a relative of mine?'—'Did I not tell you that you were afraid? come back, let me replace the bandage, and take you back to the castle.'—'Reply to me, first (and here, father, I proffered a cruel oath), 'reply to me, is he a relative of mine?'—'He is not your relative.'—'Is he a friend of mine?'—'He is not your friend.'—'No?'—'No, as true as He who is to judge us.'—'Now you will see whether I am afraid.'—I descended on tip-toe, groping with my left hand in the dark, the poniard in my right; I felt the body of the sleeping person, took aim at his heart, placed the point over it, raised my hand, thrust it . . . what a piercing cry!" And the dying man closed his ears with his hands as if it

had struck them in that moment. "Count Anselmo della Cerra, advancing to the threshold opened a dark lantern, and asked: '*Is SHE dead?*'—Thrones of heaven! a ray of light striking on the bloody bed, revealed to me in the murdered the face of Lady Spina. I ran about the room blind with rage, yelling like a madman, when an infant cry was added to the tumult of anger, fear and terror. Staggering, I approached the bed, moved the covering; horrible sight!—a new-born infant was lying near her, besmeared with her blood. The unhappy mother had yet strength enough to raise herself a moment to a sitting posture, lift up the child to her breast, and kiss him. In doing this, the blood which spurted out of her wound stained the face of the child, and the mother, opening painfully her mouth, pronounced with difficulty the following words:—'*Unhappy child, blood is the only milk that your poor mother can give you,*'—and she fell. I wrapped the baby in some linens, ran towards Count Cerra, and hardly knowing what I was doing, placed him in his hands.—'*Anselmo, what have you done? Anselmo!*'—thus rushing down anxiously through the corridor was heard Count Rinaldo crying, who, as he perceived that atrocious spectacle, fell senseless to the floor.—'*I have not overstepped your orders, Rinaldo,*' replied Count della Cerra, grinning, '*and therefore you are bound to protect me from all responsibility, both in this world and in the next.*' What can I tell you more of this demon incarnate? Taking advantage of the swoon of Count Caserta, he proposed to me to dash the child's brains against the wall, so as to get rid of him, as he said. I ordered him not to attempt it, for that little soul going to *Limbo* would have surely preceded his in the way to perdition; thus I saved the child. Count Rinaldo hardly recovered one half of his intellect after that swoon; he remembered the loss of his wife, for he felt it at every moment; the other horrors he forgot, or, if even they appeared to his mind, he believed that they proceeded from his terrified imagination. Anselmo della Cerra, after a short while, changing his mind for some shrewd design of his, not only did not wish the child killed, but instead, hav-

ing first made me swear upon the holy saints that I would never reveal his birth to a living soul, he aided me with money and advice in order to bring him up. This child grew up blessed by God and men ; introduced into the court of King Manfred, he so much pleased him, that he was admitted first among his pages, and, when he was grown up, among his esquires ; . . . he would still have been there, if . . .’

“ If what ? ”

“ If now he was not before me.”

Gentle reader, if you belong to the number of the *elect that feel*, you will understand that the art of writing, possessing only *words* to demonstrate the state of the soul, can with great difficulty describe it in a suitable manner ; for, to the greater part of men born with frozen hearts, those words mean nothing, and to the lesser part that feel, very little ; because the sensations which we describe are not only rare, but unique, and belong to the *diabolical science* of degrading the soul.

Rogiero found himself at once deprived of one father, without their letting him know another ; uprooted from a sad certainty, to be thrown into a more painful doubt ; from misfortune hurled into sin. Much he had despised, until then, human nature and his own ; now he abhorred it, because he saw the passions which he considered generous changed for him into instruments of infamy. His innocence had induced him to trust to other people’s word ; his compassion, to suppose as his father one who was not such ; his filial affection, to betray his king to avenge his betrayed father. Such complication of mysterious events, so many traps set to drag him to crime, his dearest affections used as a mockery, rage, shame, anguish, so affected him, that, seizing the bars of the bedstead, urged by irresistible frenzy, he shook it so violently, that the patient, the coverings, and everything else that stood on it trembled ; the crucifix fell to the ground ; the dying man embraced his confessor and hid his face in his bosom.

“ And did not justice avenge that crime ? Could it have remained hidden from men’s revenge ? ”

"Oh! pray God that the powerful may not desire a crime, for they care little even to hide it, and no one avenges it."

"And the fratricide that they told me of King Manfred?"

"It was false."

"And my being the son of Henry *the Cripple*?"

"False."

"And Henry?"

"He had been left alive, as I believe, in order to put him in opposition to Manfred in the question about the succession of the kingdom; but having lost his brains through long suffering, they preserved him alive, either because they dared not kill him, or because even from that time they had planned to represent him to you as your father, and thus incite you to betray your king."

"This is a miracle of wickedness! And you knew this, Roberto?"

"I knew it."

"And you betrayed me?"

"They had sworn to make me rich, and not to kill me."

"Wretched soul! be accursed through all eternity!"

"Oh, father! do you hear him? . . . Had you not forgiven me? say, did you not swear to forgive me?"

"If I have sworn, now I forswear: wherever your spirit be called, I will pursue it with incessant, interminable curses. . . ."

"Say not so, Rogiero! . . . Father, pray him not to say so! tell him how much penance I have undergone to atone for my sins. . . . I at least saved your life."

"I have cursed him who gave it to me: and, if you had done me no other injury, I would curse you for having preserved it. Die accursed!"

"Unmerciful! a day will come in which you will pay bitterly for your cruelty:—soon to appear before the tribunal of God, I feel that my crimes are too many, and too heavy to be remitted. . . . Your forgiveness would not have availed me, but it would have availed you, when in your turn you will be judged. Once again . . . will you keep your oath?"

"No."

"Then go and let me die in peace."

"No: until the veil of death shall have fallen on your eyes, I will stand before you, so that you may despair and die."

Hardly had Rogiero finished those bitter words, when the door of the cell opened, and there appeared two files of monks carrying burning tapers in their hands; the last to come, venerable in aspect, was the friar whom Rogiero had met in the grave-yard, bearing under a silk covering the holy oil for the extreme unction. He advanced to the bed; but at the sight of Rogiero, who with his hand raised was in the act of cursing, and that of Roberto, who, supplicating, terrified at the near approach of perdition, bathed in perspiration, seemed to have exhausted all means by which a man can move another to compassion, he understood the case. Therefore turning to the offender, with that dignity which is derived from zeal, he touched his forehead, saying: "Creature born to die, can you preserve your hatred forever?"

"I know not, father, whether I can, but I do wish to."

"Worthy son of the fallen race of Adam, your feelings are as base as the dust from which you sprang, and the worms to which you will return."

"He murdered my mother!" cried Rogiero, pointing to the dying man; "how could I help cursing him?"

"He," replied the friar, raising his finger to heaven, "allowed His Son to be killed in order to bless."

"I am not indeed God."

"I know that you are dust; but there lives within you a spark of divinity, a particle of the intellect of God, that ought to exert all its power to follow the example of its Maker, and to please Him and be worthy of that glory to which He calls us with all the wonders of creation. The Eternal, without sin, forgave unasked our sins; you, who are a sinner, forgive it also; we all beg you for it kneeling at your feet."

Saying which, he fell at the feet of Rogiero, and raising his hands, he entreated him with the most loving expression. The other friars, following the motion of the abbot,

did likewise, and all together with one voice cried, "Forgive, . . . forgive!"

"If even they gave me dominion over the thunder-bolt, . . . if even power should be granted me over the minds of men, . . . and everything created had a voice to exalt me, and myriads of angels would sing to me *Hosannah* forever, I would never forswear my curse. Be accursed!" cried he, with a powerful voice, shaking both his hands upon the dying man; "and with me, may all the substances that have a body, and the intellectual, the dead, the living and the unborn curse you! may from these hands fall fire and brimstone on your soul, and upon the souls of your companions in crime! may there never be a mouth but to curse you, nor a creature who would not rejoice at your torments!" . . .

He thrust aside the old man who was embracing his knees, and with a stride rushed out of the cell. Part of the sacred oil was spilled upon the ground, but the abbot, helped to rise by the bystanders, collected what was left, and approached the bed to administer the holy office; already with his hand raised over the eyes of the dying man, he had begun: "*Per istam sanctam unctionem, et suam,*" . . . when the confessor from the other side of the bed, with a faint voice whispered, "He is dead."

The abbot looked more attentively, and saw Roberto with his eyes and lips open; a mortal pallor overspread his cheeks; he seemed alive. He placed a hand upon his heart; it felt as if he had placed it upon marble. He took a corner of the sheet and covered his face, saying, "He is gone in peace!"


CHAPTER XV.

THE DEMONIAK.

Che di amara radice
 Amare foglie, e amaro frutto nasce ;
 Il misero si pasce
 D'orrore, e di paura,
 Di lacrime e sospiri,
 Sempre in nuovi martiri,
 E, per lui solo al mondo il pianto dura.
ORESTE, *Tragedia Antica.*

... From bitter roots
 Spring bitter leaves and bitter fruits ;
 Still feeds the wretched one
 On shocks of horror, tears and sighs.
 Ever new sufferings are begun,
 For him alone the salt tear never dries.

M. G. M.

 UN,—quick, Beltramo, bring me my armor immediately,—and my lance,—and sword,—and—”

“Dagger ?”

“Yes indeed, my dagger. The noblest invention for destruction that the human mind can boast . . . the dagger. Saddle my horse. . . .”

“Holy Saints ! Do you intend to depart, Sir Knight ? Think what you are doing, for your wounds are only just healing ; and, weak as you are, I do not know whether . . .”

“Go and do what I tell you. What has made you so eager to look after my welfare ? Who told you to take care of my health ? He who could or should care for it, does not at all ; and would you wish to, simpleton, who are not competent to think for yourself ? Do you pretend to be less sad, less weak, less wicked than I ?”

“May I die excommunicated, Sir Knight, if I understand a syllable of what you say. Have you not possibly seen a goblin in the forest ? Come, do not persist in going now ; Sir Ghino has not yet returned, and it would not be at all courteous to go away without taking leave.”

"Why speak of courtesy to me, fellow, when others betray me in jest, break my heart in sport, and come, as if to a show, to enjoy the sight of my grief? My arms, I say, my arms!"

"Ah, Sir Knight! you will throw away your life at any rate. Life is life, however, and once lost, cannot be bought back for money. It would be a great sin, too, for you to die so miserably; for you seem strong and valiant. First get well cured, and you will not want for opportunities to leave this world. . . ."

"Where is my armor?"

"Holy Saints! Ah, Sir Knight! if you have no love for yourself, at least have some for me. Consider, I beseech you, that the iron rubbing against your wounds, would reopen them in less than an hour."

"Oh! what a fate is mine, that the hatred and the love of men should be equally troublesome to me!"

This dialogue, as my readers will have guessed, took place between Rogiero, who, after leaving the convent, had returned to Ghino's house, and Beltramo, the charitable watcher with the dying Drengotto. When Rogiero ceased speaking, he became thoughtful, and bowed his head in his hands. Beltramo, seeing that he was speaking to the wind, thought that the best thing he could do was to execute his orders. The bandit had hardly left the room, when Rogiero, shaking his head, began to walk hastily to and fro.

"I will prostrate myself before his throne," he cried; "I will prostrate. . . . Shall I, who would never have bowed before a mortal, fall at his feet? Yes, I will, for my pride sprang from my innocence. . . . Oh! how crime degrades!"

"Here is your armor, Sir Knight," said Beltramo, entering.

Rogiero, not heeding him, continued: "Was my crime voluntary? I would have welcomed death to escape it; and yet I bear the penalty. This is a grievous path; misfortune lashes me on, that I may, without resting, reach the end; and at the end, infamy awaits me. . . ."

"Your armor, Sir Knight." . . .

"Now I fear the repose of earth, because it would fall upon me like a load upon the obstinate man who would burden himself with more than he had strength to carry . . . and it would not be voluntary . . . nor should I have the same reasons as before to excuse myself . . . nor to accuse him. . . . Should I not? . . . Am I not surrounded by snares? Have they not dragged me to ruin as they would a murderer to the gallows? I will boldly say to him"

"Your armor, Sir Knight, your armor."

"What should I do with armor? My enemy is invincible; sword and spear are of no avail against him; he fights with the will. Greater strength than mine, greater courage, have lost the battle. Take away this armor; it mocks my weakness; for there is no created thing that cannot destroy this feeble covering of flesh."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Knight, but did you not send me for it?"

"I send you for it? Did you understand me rightly?"

"Take from me any faculty you like, and you will not hear a complaint; but in my ears, Sir Knight, I believe I am as good as any man."

Rogiero made a gesture as if trying to recall something which had escaped his memory. "If I said so, I certainly was right. . . . Oh! condition that excites laughter, for it is beyond weeping," he said, with a scornful look. "Ah! I remember now. Was I not to prostrate myself, and ask pardon?" He colored to the roots of his hair, and after a short pause, resumed: "It is not with that, not with that; that humiliation begins: it follows sin like its shadow. It may be increased by humbling one's self; but now the degradation is complete. Give me my cuirass."

Beltramo, obeying the command, helped him to pass his arms through the openings at the shoulders, and began to fasten it, clasping the buckles that went from under the right armpit to the waist; for cuirasses, corselets, coats-of-mail, and similar pieces of armor were made like modern vests, except that they were hinged on one side so as to open and shut, and on the other, as we have said, they had several buckles by which they were fastened

upon the wearer. Beltramo, busily engaged in clasp- ing them, was suddenly interrupted by an exclamation of pain from Rogiero, who cried : " Ah ! How much have my enemies given you to murder me ? " and with a quick motion, he put his hand to his back to see if he were wounded.

" Sir Knight," replied Beltramo, drawing back, " do you believe yourself really among banditti ? Did I not tell you that your wounds were not yet wholly cured ? And this one will give you more pain on your journey than any other, for it comes just under a buckle of the cuirass. How have I injured you that you should so strangely suspect me ? "

Rogiero turned to Beltramo with such a smile as one wears when listening to words without much meaning, and said : " Every man is good till he becomes wicked ; nor does the absence of crime argue rectitude of mind : who knows how many you may have committed in intention ? But you will answer that your hand has not carried out the treachery of your thought ; do you think that you are on that account less guilty ? Perhaps opportunity was wanting ; but that may present itself at any moment. You look incredulous. Do you not believe it ? Sound your own heart, braggart, and tell me, if you dare, that you have never conceived crime in your mind. "

" I beg your pardon, Sir Knight, but I think the best thing for our hearts is to leave them in peace. For myself, I do not believe that I am better or worse than most other men. This I know for certain, that I would not betray any one, much less you, Sir Knight ; moreover, I am a plain man, and do not understand such subtleties. But think as you please about it ; it does not trouble me at all. So approach without fear, if you wish me to finish fastening your cuirass ; or rather, if you will for once take advice, let me remove it, so that, staying a few days longer, you may entirely recover your health. "

Rogiero, approaching Beltramo, ordered him to finish arming him ; and although from time to time the iron, pressing upon his unhealed wounds, gave him sharp torture, he no longer, as before, suspected treachery, but

expressed his agony only by a stifled groan. Then Beltramo would stop and look up at him. The expression of pain had passed away from Rogiero's face, and his features were set in a certain majestic impassiveness, which neither appeared nor was natural to them, but was called there by force, and there by force compelled to remain, from a lofty impulse of pride; which was a sublime, and at the same time a moving, spectacle.

"When," said Rogiero, "when Sir Ghino returns, tell him that since our nature is so base, that our sorrows are lessened or soothed by the recital of others' woes, let him be comforted by hearing mine, for his, in comparison, are mere child's play. Tell him that I left him not to sadden him, if he truly loves me, with the knowledge of my terrible story; or if his love is mere pretence, not to give him pleasure; or rather it is better to say nothing whatever. From my history he can learn only evil; it will teach that honor, that constancy, avail nothing; that love, charity, and every other generous emotion avail nothing; that a power which we cannot resist forces us onward; that there is no man living who can boast himself guiltless,—if he does, he is a fool: and when an opportunity offers, his soul will belie itself;—in short, everything that it is better not to know, the knowledge of which prostrates instead of arousing the mind, and makes it groan under the weight of humanity, like a slave under the weight of the task assigned him." In this strain he might have long continued adding error to error, had not Beltramo, fastening the last strap, said, "It is finished."

"Happy shall I be when those words are spoken over my corpse! Still, who knows whether, even in the grave, some affliction does not await me, and whether even there I am sure of finding rest! Nevertheless, I cannot hope for it elsewhere, since we have only life and death, and I despair of ever finding it in the former."

Beltramo having finished arming him, he left the room, and descended into the court-yard, where he found his good steed Allah just saddled, and held by a groom. Without another word, he put his foot in the stirrup, mounted, and rode out of the court. Just as he passed

through the gate, Ghino, returning with some of his men from the expedition, appeared before him, crossing his path.

"Whither, prince?"

"Whither it pleases Him who has deprived me of father and innocence at one blow."

"You give me strange tidings, Rogiero : will you have the goodness to explain them, and tell me what has happened to you?"

"Do not seek to know, Sir Ghino. Already you know enough to make you despise your race ; I should make you hate it, which would be too great an injury, both to you and to it. Let me pass."

"You are sick in soul, my friend ; and if pity does not let us abandon one whose body is diseased, much less can we desert one sick at heart, whose pains are much more severe and terrible."

"Ghino, Ghino, step aside, or I will ride over you, happen what may."

"Eternal God !" cried Ghino, drawing back, and lifting his hands to heaven, "Thou hast deprived him of his senses !"

"Friend," exclaimed Rogiero, as he passed him, "if it is true, though I do not believe it, that one man can love another, we should find another word to express that love, since friendship means everything that hate, rage, and deceit can commit against the human race. Henceforward, when any one wishes to call me friend, I will stand against a wall, to protect myself from a blow from behind, and will hold my purse, that I may not be robbed in an embrace." And he added many similar sentences as he rode along, but the wind bore them away.

Rogiero rode forward, agitated by the fever of sad thoughts ; but all human troubles must find an end, abating if they are such as the strength can endure, or destroying the mind if they gain the mastery. Rogiero's not being strong enough to destroy it, the courtesy which was a marked feature in his character began to make itself felt, and reproved him for his churlishness to Ghino, the only man whom he had deemed worthy of respect and

honor. He turned his head, as if to make his apologies towards the place where he had parted from that brave man, thinking that his horse must have borne him out of sight of his dwelling, but he was mistaken ; the steed, left to his own will, had gone on very slowly, and he could easily see the good Sir Ghino standing looking after him, just where he had left him. Drawing the right bridle, he touched his horse with the left spur, and before one could say "Ave Maria," was beside Ghino, dismounted, and embraced him passionately. His head, as if weighed down by his agitation, fell upon Ghino's shoulders ; his face was pale, his eyes dry, his tongue powerless. Ghino supported him, apparently unmoved, except for a large tear, that, rolling slowly down his cheek, rested upon Rogiero's hair. Others followed ; but his countenance, as we have said, remained unchanged ; not a muscle moved ; it seemed as if the eyes had nothing to do with those tears, as if they rose spontaneously from the heart. A poet, seeing them fall from under those long lashes over a dry, hard-featured face, such as Ghino's was, would have thought of those verses of Homer, where he compares the weeping of Agamemnon

To a streamlet deep,
Which darkly pours, o'er rocks precipitous,
Its gloomy waters.*

It would not be well to relate the emotions of our heroes ; they cannot be described. They uttered not a word, and yet that mute embrace said more than they could have expressed in any other manner. The one did not ask, and the other promised ; the one accepted, and the other did not offer ; in short, these secret sympathies of the purified nature, which the "common herd" cannot conceive, are as sacred as the mysteries of the sanctuary.

"Then," began Ghino, after a long silence, "is your intention of departing immediately unchangeable ?"

"It is."

"Would you like any of my men to accompany you ?"

* Iliad, Book IX.

Rogiero pressed his hand, and gave him a grateful look ; then replied : " Sir Ghino, the most endurable thing that life now offers me is solitude."

" Be it as you wish. I am about to turn my steps towards the kingdom of Naples. I shall take up my abode on the slope of the mountains of Arpino, near the banks of the Garigliano, in the territory once occupied by the valor of the Saracens. That territory I look upon as a paternal inheritance, for it belonged to a persecuted and unhappy race. There, Rogiero, you know, will live a heart whose last sigh but one will be for God, its last for you, and an arm which will fight in your defence so long as it can lift a sword. Only do not call me against Manfred ;—I can hold my right hand over burning coals, but not raise it against him whom I have once loved."

" However strange it may seem to you, Sir Ghino, know that if I ever call upon you for aid, it will be in favor of King Manfred. More than this you cannot know, of what has happened ; it would be too painful for me to tell, or for you to hear ; let what I have told you suffice. Ghino, my beloved friend, farewell." So saying, Rogiero again pressed his hand.

Ghino replied : " You lift a weight from my heart. I am sure now that it will not be through us that the Barbarians are not driven beyond the Alps. Your sword, Rogiero, judging from what I saw at Rome, can fully compensate for any evil your tongue may have done. Farewell. Be sure not to forget,—on the hillside of Arpino—"

" Forget ! when my soul can forget that there has been a yesterday, and that there will be a morrow, then only can it forget you, Ghino."

" Well and good : then there will I await your summons. Meanwhile we will sharpen our daggers, so that if any of the French escape, they can tell those beyond the mountains how Italian steel cuts. Farewell. Hold, Rogiero, if it should happen that you cannot conveniently come in person, take this dagger ; the messenger by whom you send it to me will return accompanied by four hundred troopers, and a friend."

"What can I say, Ghino? Farewell."

"Do not put off sending for me till you are in extremity. Often, Rogiero, a smaller number of men than I lead, coming opportunely, has given the victory to an army, which thousands, the moment being lost, could not save. Do not think to spare me; remember that in taking up arms, I do nothing for you, little for Manfred, but much for myself; for above all the highest pleasures of the loyal citizen, I place that of fighting for my country. Do you promise, Rogiero?"

"I promise."

"One more embrace, and farewell!"

Ghino held his stirrup. Rogiero, when mounted, extended his hand to him: he lifted it to his forehead, saying: "It does my head as much good as my father's blessing. Above all, take care of your wounds. Farewell, my beloved Rogiero; farewell! farewell!"

The unfortunate youth departed, looking back, and from time to time saluting his friend, who did not stir from his place as long as he could follow him with his eyes. When he had lost sight of him, on account of the hilly character of the country, and the turnings and windings of the forest, he went up into a little tower, to wait until he should emerge upon the open plain. He watched him thence until he was lost in the distance: then, bending down, he leaned his elbows on the battlements of the tower, and resting his cheek on his hand, remained a long time gazing on the spot where Rogiero had disappeared. What were the thoughts that passed through his mind we cannot tell; we will say only, that as he turned to descend, he murmured: "As the joys of life come so seldom, and pass so quickly, it is my opinion that they are given us to make us feel our griefs the more keenly."

Rogiero, learning on the way that the court and the principal barons were to assemble before long at Benevento, where Manfred had ordered a general rendezvous, determined to turn his course in that direction, instead of to Naples, as he had at first intended. On the eighth day after his parting from Ghino, and after a fatiguing journey over bad roads, rendered more painful by the ir-

ritation of his wounds, he came in sight of Santa Agata dei Goti. Whether he feared that he should not be able to conceal himself, or whether he desired to avoid the sight of men, Rogiero resolved not to enter the city, but to stop at the first inn he came to, in the country; nor was it long before his eye was attracted by a sign painted upon a wall. The painter, as well as one could tell, had intended to represent a moon in the first quarter, when, as Horace says in one of his odes, and the muse knows with how pretty a conceit, it resembles the horns of a heifer. Some black balls under the moon were probably meant for clouds,—at least, I think so. Above this marvellous work of art, the following couplet was written with a coal :

“ Now dark and silent is the night ;
Come to the Moon for cheer and light.”

Truly, said Rogiero to himself, it might be better, but since we cannot have everything, we must take what we can get. So saying, he dismounted, and having cared for Allah as for a friend, he entered the inn.

The landlord stood in the centre of the room ;— a strange figure ; very thin and tall, he lost something of his apparent height from a stoop, which also gave a hollowness to his chest ; as thin as Pharoah's lean kine, so that one fond of osteology might easily have counted his bones ; a narrow forehead, about two inches high ; his nose and chin like friends eager to embrace, endeavored to pass the wide chasm of his livid lips ; his eyes were red, his gestures like those of a monkey ; his speech at first slow, then remarkably rapid. The first feeling which his appearance excited was contempt ; the second, fear. He wanted only a tail to be taken for Moloch, the demon of avarice.

“ Welcome,” said he, cap in hand, making a very low bow, the moment Rogiero appeared, and scrutinizing him from head to foot, like a custom-house officer. “ Welcome, ir Knight. Alas ! I have never felt so much inclined to grieve at my poverty as now, that I cannot as I would wish do honor to the knight who

favors me with his presence ; nevertheless, I hope, in Santo Menna the Hermit, our holy patron saint, to be able to serve you honestly for your money. You are a lucky man to come first to the Moon ; if you had gone farther, you might have found the Golden Eagle, or the White Bear. Santo Menna ! fine monsters they are, ogres to fleece poor strangers. And they boast that their ducks are fatter than mine,—as if they did not breathe the same air ; and I can tell you, Sir Knight, that they have given the unfortunates who happened to stop there, more chickens dead of the pip than there are flowers in spring ; and one of my women-servants, who is acquainted with those rascals, assured me the other day that they gave an honest man a cat for a hare. For my part, I do not know why government does not interfere, merely for the public health. Well, for some time things have been going all wrong. I am a plain man, and do not know many things that you noblemen know ; still, if it were for me to command, I should wish—”

Rogiero, resigning himself to the prospect of a poor supper, without paying any more attention to what the landlord was saying, directed his steps towards a room whence issued the confused noise of several people speaking all together. Standing upon the threshold, he perceived four men, who wore morions, dented and rusty, and iron corselets ; they had placed their halberds and daggers in a corner of the room, and were seated on one side of a table, drinking and talking. These men, who belonged to some company of armed vassals, such as every baron took pride in keeping about him, rose at Rogiero's appearance, and saluted him very respectfully, as from old habit they were accustomed to do, to all whose armor was ornamented with gold or silver. Rogiero thanked them by a gesture, and signed them to be reseated ; but his attention was not attracted by them so much as by a fifth person, who, the moment he saw Rogiero enter, hastily pushing away from him a large dish of delicious viands, began to eat instead a handful of dried olives, and concealed his face as much as possible in his cowl, for he wore a pilgrim's dress. With all his efforts,

he did not succeed in escaping Rogiero's notice, who, recognizing him, experienced a sensation of dread, such as one would feel in listening to a terrible tale. Ashamed of turning pale at the sight of a man whom he considered so base, he drew a long breath, and said with a sigh: "You here, pilgrim?"

The sound of his own voice broke the spell. He recovered his vigor of thought and feeling, and glancing at the four ruffians, he said, smiling scornfully: "Henceforward, it seems that you will not need my company."

"Ah! he who seeks, finds, Sir Knight," replied the pilgrim. "The snow falls where the wind blows it, and from a better head than mine comes the saying: 'With saints in the church, in the tavern with gluttons.'"

"And if I am not mistaken, it seems to me that you are more fitted for the company of the latter than the former; and I can prove by day what I said to you by night when I first met you. I do not know why you try to deceive me, but certainly your eating, or abstaining in my presence from food that you were enjoying, will not aid you in your attempt. Continue your repast, for whether I saw game or olives upon the table, I should not change my opinion of you; the face tells the story."

"Oh! if you saw me, I will go on eating; a sin concealed is half pardoned; but this time they will charge me the entire debt." So saying, the pilgrim took some great mouthfuls. "The worst of it, in my opinion, is the scandal: I might almost say that without scandal there would be no crime. When men do not see, God also shuts His eyes, and permits—"

"Wretch! If the voice of your conscience makes you safe, do you think that that of others would trouble you? The cedar of Lebanon bends before the fury of the blast, but does not break."

"Indeed, Sir Knight, as it is impossible—to continue to speak in figures—that a butler, hurrying with a goblet filled to the brim, should not spill a few drops, so it is likewise impossible that a man should keep his soul white to the grave. Now, as you would not blame the butler for concealing the deficiency of the cup, so also you

would not condemn a man for hiding the black spots on his soul under the part which is still white.

“ ‘ With artful tricks, and sly deceit,
A man can live six months complete ;
With sly deceit, and artful tricks,
He well can live the other six,’

as the poet says.”

Just then the landlord entered, bringing the food that Rogiero had ordered. I will not say of what it consisted, nor how it was prepared, for I am completely ignorant of culinary matters. As far as I am concerned, Apicius might have slept a thousand years on one side, for I certainly would not waken him to make him lie on the other. In this, as in everything else, we must yield the palm to the author of *Waverley*. It is sufficient to say that Rogiero's forebodings were realized, and that he had never in his life made a repast less to his taste, or more highly lauded.

“ I do not say it for a boast, for pride is too black a sin,” said the landlord, “ but go to the Golden Eagle, if you wish to taste miserable fare. Go to the White Bear. Santo Menna ! there indeed one can say that the bread is like rocks. Wine ? Oh ! I assure you, that I can give you wine equal to what King Manfred drinks. Filippello di Faggiano, a kinsman of mine, who has served many years at court, assured me one day that in his opinion they were of the same brand. Nor in my house are you charged, as at others, four *tari* a measure ; for let us remain poor, but in the holy fear of God. I buy it at three *tari* and a half, and sell it at three and three quarters. I shall gain but little in this world, but patience ! I shall save my soul in the next, for in this we are but pilgrims, as Friar Giocondo says, but in the next we are to live more than a million years. I have been told, Sir Knight, that the punishment of landlords in a future state will be to be sunk in the water that they have mixed with their wine ; think how many fathoms deep the host of the Golden Eagle will lie ! Truly I pity him, for he has a family ; but as to him of the White Bear, I

believe that if he were permitted to try to rise to the surface, it would take him all eternity to reach it !”

The landlord, while thus running on, had unfolded a wretched little table-cloth, and was spreading it on the table. Our pilgrim observing it, turned to Rogiero, saying: “Sir Knight, may God preserve you, if you would like my company, I will not be so uncourteous to you as you were to me. Come, I will move up, and make room for you to sit down.”

“If,” replied Rogiero, looking angrily at him, “if you had the place of a dog at a table, and I were to sit in the chair of the baron who threw him the bones, I would scorn the seat.”

“That is a brave man, sir,” said the landlord, pretending to take Rogiero’s part. “That is what we call giving three loaves for two, and better wine for good. You have found your match, pilgrim, and so it always happens to those who seek for more than they can get.”

“Have I offended him, by making room for him at my table?” replied the pilgrim. “We have received from very old times the example of the dog which bit the hand that fed him; nevertheless, what does our Master teach? ‘If any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also;’ and ‘Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.’ So I pardon you.”

“Indeed! Show me what else you could do, and I will thank you for your pardon.”

“Often!” declared the pilgrim, fixing upon Rogiero eyes as malignant as those of a viper, “often has a spark burnt castles and abbeys; often has a worm destroyed the loftiest oak upon the mountain.”

“Be silent, if you wish me to consider you honest; if there were a shadow of virtue in you, you would boast less of yourself.”

“That is not good reasoning; praise in one’s own mouth may be a fault, but does not exclude the quality praised.”

“I swear that if you had the power of the sparks, you would burn; you are a crushed reptile.”

“I am a man who is often hindered from doing good

when he wishes, but who can do evil even when he does not wish to?"

"The night when, unable to see your face, I knew you to be a villain from the sound of your voice, my judgment did not deceive me, although I did not know then, nor do I now, of what sins you are guilty. I do not know whether you are wickedly foolish, or wickedly wise, wicked by art or by nature; you appear to me like a murderous face, half concealed by a cloak, like a spectre more than half lost in the darkness; every look of yours brings trouble, every word pierces the heart. If it is true that there are serpents whose breath has power to paralyze the feelings, you are certainly one in form of a man."

"Sir Knight, although the excitement of your blood caused by an *imagined misfortune* rendered you once quick to insult, and me patient to suffer, I warn you that it will not always be in your power to injure, though in me the virtue of endurance remains unimpaired. There is an eye which sees the wrongs of the weak, and a hand which avenges them."

"Would that I could see it!"

"Could you bear the sight? It lives, although concealed. The thunderbolt *descends from a hidden hand*."

The voice in which the pilgrim uttered these last words was so different from that in which he had hitherto spoken, that Rogiero sank down almost senseless, with his head upon the table. At the same moment the pilgrim beckoned to two of his companions, who rose and quickly placed themselves by Rogiero's table. The landlord, seeing these ominous looking preparations, crept softly towards the door. No one breathed: for full ten minutes all was still. At last Rogiero murmured in a low voice: "It is he,—the fatal man,—the instrument of destiny. Did not my soul recognize his voice with the same horror? Did not my blood freeze, my pulses stand still?" Then in a louder voice: "It is he himself!" Uttering these words, he clenched his hands, stretched forth his arms, every muscle of his face rigid, as if he had collected all his powers not to succumb to the stroke, and repeated them over and over again. "Were he an incarnate fiend,

we should sink together into the eternal fires, for I would fasten myself upon him, nor leave him until he had given me his reason for so cruelly persecuting and deceiving me. Villain! I never harmed him, had never even seen him, and he has wished to madden me,—has poisoned my life. But the fool has left me enough to give him death,—and if he is mortal, he shall receive it now.”

With a sudden movement he upset the table, and meat, drink and crockery fell in ruins to the floor. He rose, his looks terrible, his face flaming with anger, his gesture threatening. Woe to the pilgrim if Rogiero had reached him, for he would have had no need of a doctor to despatch him to the other world! The two ruffians who had placed themselves beside the knight caught him by the arms, saying: “Whither, Sir Knight?”

“With you I have nothing to do; off,—leave me,—for I must exchange some words with that fiend yonder.”

“You can say all you want at this distance, as well as if you were nearer: you do not seem to have lost your tongue.”

“No, no, I must be near him: off, I tell you;” and he tried to shake himself free. “Unhand me, I command you, I pray you.”

“Do not come near, Sir Knight, or I will do you an injury; do you not know that the devil scorches? Ah! Puccio, hold him fast, I say, and you, Giannozzo—”

“Do so, if you can: but you must tell me why you have, for months, incited me to avenge a man who was not my father. Tell me, tell me, why have you urged me on to crime?”

Rogiero, in an access of fury, gathered his strength and strained every nerve to get free from the ruffians, and throw himself upon the pilgrim, but their hold was too firm to be easily shaken off. Still with the sudden strength he exerted, he drew them across the room with him. The pilgrim, quickly losing his boasted courage, gave a push to the table, and turned to fly. The table fell, as Rogiero’s had done, and everything on it also fell topsyturvy. Perhaps the vehemence of fear was as violent as that of rage: perhaps they were placed insecurely on

purpose, that the least push might upset them, and the landlord have a chance to charge double for all that had been upon them.

"A fine way truly to obtain the grace of our baron, you rascals!" howled the pilgrim, running round the room; "hold him, villains that you are; do you not see that if he gets clear from you, he will strangle us all?"

"What destruction!" cried the landlord, on the other hand. "What destruction! Mother of Sorrows! My poor plates, which I bought bright and new at the fair of Piscitella! You have spoiled the set, sirs; who will pay for them? Eh? he who breaks must pay,—who will pay?"

"Do you use violence towards me?" cried Rogiero, in his turn. "What is this? Ah! if I could reach my sword.—Wretches!—Treachery! Treachery!"

"Go," ordered one of the ruffians to the landlord, "go and get all the ropes you have in the kitchen—"

"But this has nothing to do . . ."

"What! Do you think we have done an *agostaro's* worth of damage? If we burnt the house down with you and your family in it, the loss would not amount to so much."

"My prophecies have come true," said the other ruffian; "if you had followed my advice at first, and accustomed him to a broken head for payment, he would not be so troublesome now. Go, this moment, you rascal, and get the ropes."

"But consider—see—"

"If you say another word," said the ruffian, shaking his fist, "I swear by the soul of my father, that in a very short time you will cease answering questions in this world."

The landlord, looking very dissatisfied, immediately departed. Meanwhile Rogiero exerted himself to the utmost to break from their hold. He fought with hands, feet and teeth; those who received his blows felt them for days after. He uttered fierce exclamations: often, when thrown to the ground, with the weight of a man upon him, with extraordinary strength and agility, he got him

under, and rose, trampling upon him. The noise and hubbub might have been heard half a mile off. At that moment the landlord returned, with a scared look, holding the ropes in his hand, crying : "There are people coming this way !"

One of the ruffians put his head out of the window, and drew it back again, with an angry oath.

The noise was heard gradually approaching, and the landlord began to cry in a loud voice : "Leave this knight ! He is in my house, where he ought to be as safe as in church ; if he has injured you, wait outside until he departs. What a shame,—so many against one ! What treachery ! What murder !—I protest—"

The ruffians laughed in his face. The pilgrim, who understood his artifice, said to him : "Listen, Pierone, do you think that you have committed no other sins that will bring you to the gallows, if you conceal this one ? You have already received one *agostaro*, to help us capture this knight, if he were taken in your house. Here is another. By the freedom with which I throw away money, you can perceive that I do not spend my own. He who commanded me to take him has power to hang you even for giving a drink to a thirsty man. Do you understand ? You had better, if you don't want a coffin in here before long."

A crowd of people, highly excited, came pouring into the room ; they were vassals of the neighborhood, attracted by the tumult. They asked what had happened, what was the matter, and some tried to liberate Rogiero. If he had kept silent, they would certainly have taken him out of the hands of those ruffians, but seeing the pilgrim attempt to hide himself in the crowd, he could not help crying, pointing him out : "Seize that serpent, that demon ; for months and months he has been persecuting me !"

All eyes were turned towards the pilgrim. He, perceiving that he could not conceal himself, stepped boldly forward, and turning towards the oldest in the room, prayed with clasped hands and eyes upturned and wet with tears : "Oh Lord, merciful and wise art Thou in

all Thy works, and thus this Thy present dispensation must be good, though it appears to us under the form of evil ; yet may the prayers of these Thy faithful servants, and of me a sinner, prevail with Thee to liberate this poor, baptized flesh"—and he pointed to the knight—"from such tribulation. See how the enemy of mankind afflicts him ; see how the fallen angel exults in his victory—"

"Ah, traitor !" shouted Rogiero, "let me but reach you, and you will see which of us is possessed with a devil !"

"Ah ! see, brothers," said the pilgrim, without heeding him, "see to what sin brings us. Learn wisdom from the example of others ; come to the sacraments, fast, watch, for the tempter is always on the lookout—"

"Is he possessed ?" cried the assembled crowd, greatly frightened.

"Villains ! Fools !" exclaimed the maddened Rogiero, and sprang forward, grinding his teeth.

"Hold him fast, brothers, but tenderly ; for although possessed, he is still a fellow-being. Hold him—bind him—for the love of God ; see, brothers, the malice of the devil, which excites him against me, because I am a priest. Unhappy he, if he should strike me ! He would incur excommunication. The canon speaks clearly : *Si quis suadente Diabulo hujus sacrilegii reatum incurrerit, quod clericum, vel monachum, etc.*"

The people, who had entered, looking as fierce as if they were going to take a castle by storm, dared not now come near ; they crossed themselves, and muttered prayers. Most of them thought it best not to go away, but some went softly out of the door, and returned home. The old men prayed ; the old women, incapable of feeling pity, took occasion, from the demoniac they believed themselves looking upon, to mention all they had ever seen within the limits of the parish. The young men looked, now at their fathers, now at Rogiero, who, it appeared to them, had reason enough to be furious, when he was so cruelly bound ; yet, fearful of doing wrong, they were silent, wondering at the gravity of the paternal

faces. The young girls, whether from a kindly feeling that vanishes as years increase, or as I believe from weakness, came nearer to him than any of the others, saying, "Poor young man! What a pity! How handsome he would be! Oh! if he could recover his health, I would give the cap which my uncle the priest brought me from the fair!"—"And I my best veil!"—"Oh, but the mercy of God is not obtained by caps and veils," said a sweet-voiced young girl, with the face of an angel. "Let us pray to Him from our hearts, and perhaps He will hear us; He is so good, mamma says, and we will pray for a good thing, so He will listen." And the other girls, following her advice, joined her in fervent prayer for the unhappy man. Rogiero looked at them. Beautiful they were by nature, more beautiful did they appear in that attitude of prayer. He was naturally susceptible to such influences; he sighed and appeared to feel soothed and comforted. For some moments he saw only through the tears that filled his eyes. He was about to speak more calmly than he had hitherto done, and those who held him would have gladly let him go, on condition of their own safety, when the pilgrim, perceiving the danger, began to harangue: "Do not be deceived by this apparent calmness, my brethren. Landlord, bring me the holy water; notice, sirs, the great cunning of the infernal spirit, which pretends to retreat when about to be conquered; see how it writhes when sprinkled with holy water!" and taking the water, he threw it in Rogiero's face. "*Ne reminiscaris, Domine, delicta nostra, neque vindictam sumas de peccatis nostris.* Say the *Pater Noster.*"

"Kill him!" cried Rogiero, almost beside himself; "kill that assassin of the innocent—"

"*Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.*

"*Sed libera nos a malo.*

"*Amen. Oremus—*" repeated the pilgrim.

"Ah! This is too much!" cried Rogiero furiously, endeavoring to escape from the hands of those executioners, and to kill or be killed. His state is easier to imagine than to describe. Some idea can be formed of

it from the fact that many who passed for brave men fled, making the sign of the cross. At last he had exhausted every effort that fury can suggest to the desperate ; and the pretended pilgrim, with impious sacrilege, had pronounced many holy exorcisms, but the devil did not come out of him, for there was no devil there. The ruffians glanced from time to time towards the door, to see if the crowd was dispersing, that they might make their escape ; it was diminished, but a formidable number still remained. In this perplexity the landlord thus addressed the pilgrim : " Holy pilgrim, you, as priest, know better than I that sanctity of life is not sufficient to exorcise devils, but that the gift of grace is also required. You, perhaps, have received the power of driving out the lesser demons, but this one is too mighty for you."

The pilgrim bit his lip with vexation at not having thought first of this expedient ; still he determined to take advantage of it, and with downcast face replied : " Behold, the dust has forgotten its baseness, and God has punished its presumption. And what a miserable sinner am I, to wish to perform miracles granted only to the saints of the Lord, and to omit the sacred rites, the stole, and other ceremonials necessary to the office of the exorcist ! Brethren, greater grace than mine is necessary to relieve this afflicted one. My advice is to take him to some place where he can receive the application of holy relics and the *Agnus Dei*."

At these words of the perfidious pilgrim, the whole crowd began to shout : " Let us take him to Sant' Agata ! to Sant' Agata !" repeated all ; though we do not say that the ruffians joined very heartily in the cry, for each of them seemed to feel the tightening of the halter round his throat. They lifted up the senseless form of the unhappy youth, and exclaiming, " Room for the demoniac ! for charity's sake, men, room !" and enforcing their cries with vigorous thrusts, they succeeded in passing the door. The landlord had quietly approached the corner where Rogiero had laid his arms and the more cumbrous parts of his armor, and whilst with his lips he muttered the word " charity," his brain was busy with the thought : If

those rascals do not remember this armor, I by selling it could more than make up for my loss ; so true it is that one man's loss is another man's gain. One of the ruffians, just as he was leaving the room, turned and froze the course of the argument in the landlord's mind ; probably, if the crowd had not just then closed around him, he would have returned for the armor. The landlord saw him cross the threshold with the joy of a reprieved criminal ; he extended those eager hands, the mere appearance of which gave the idea of rapine, and, trembling with the certainty of success, seized the armor, and with sidelong steps, and watchful look, like a cat who had stolen a fish from the kitchen, hastily crossed the room, and went to hide it in the coal-bin.

The ruffians, who had a litter, born by two stout horses, all ready for the removal of Rogiero, shut him into it, and mounting their own steeds, rode at first slowly along the road to Sant' Agata dei Goti.

They had already come quite near to the city, but the crowd did not diminish, and the pilgrim did not relish the thought of entering. On the way, he had been racking his brains to think of some new expedient, but none seemed practicable. Forced, however, to adopt some measure, he called to some of the oldest of the throng, and said to them, " I am thinking, brethren, of taking our poor demoniac to Benevento."

" Oh ! Why so, holy pilgrim ? "

" Because the image of the Blessed Mary of Peace is worshipped there, and seems to be there on purpose for such miracles."

" Pilgrim, as far as I know, you have not yet visited the shrine of Santo Menna, and do not know that every year the Brothers are obliged to remove the votive offerings, and hang them up in the refectory."

" It may be so, brothers ; but Santo Menna is a Norman Saint, and Mary is a much greater saint than he, and is the mother and spouse of the Lord, as you know."

" Certainly, I do not mean that you do not speak the truth, but Santo Menna has performed other miracles, and—"

"And you think he might also perform this, eh? Who denies it? Let us leave the saints, and speak of worldly matters. My brother, you know better than I, that Sant' Agata is a bishopric, but Benevento an archbishopric. Now, in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, an archbishop is much more powerful than a bishop. Now, suppose that the former should succeed, and not the latter, would not your conscience smite you for having thus turned from Herod to Pilate?"

"You speak the truth; but Santo Menna has performed other miracles, and—"

"Will do more. Who denies it? We should not be Christians if we denied it; but what says the prophet? '*Onagrus silvester, intelligis ne, me velle ducere illum in ore leonis—in capite draconis.*'"

The poor man, overwhelmed by the Latin, did not dare to say another word; the *ore leonis*, the *capite draconis*, had made him shudder both inwardly and outwardly; he slunk back into the crowd. The news that they were not going to Sant' Agata was quickly spread among them, at which the greater number left the throng, and returned whence they came. Gradually, as they advanced along the road to Benevento, leaving Sant' Agata behind them, others by twos and threes began to follow more slowly, then stopped, then turned towards home. The company lengthened out, like the flax as it becomes thread under the old woman's fingers. The night was drawing on, and the shadows becoming larger and deeper, when the ruffians—perceiving that now only a few young men were following them, who would be gladly doing something more agreeable than trudging thus by night, fifteen miles or more over a mountainous country, had not their sweethearts begged them to see the end of the matter—thought that they had better be entirely alone, and in that intention immediately turned their horses and spurred in among them, dealing heavy blows to the right and left with the handles of their halberds.

"Off with you, vassals! off with you, peasants!" they shouted between the blows; "home; it is growing late,

and the way is long ; home, or to-morrow the dew will fall upon your heads."

These peasants, as we said before, had already more than half a mind to return, and now, when such persuasive arguments were added, judge whether they did not show their heels. He who runs, runs ; but he who flees, flies. So, all out of breath, they reached their homes, where they related many things that were true, very many that were false, and wished to take arms, follow the ruffians, and take vengeance upon them, worthy to be recorded upon marble, and to be remembered for a thousand years. But an old man rose, and observed that they must be tired, and that they had only two legs apiece, while the ruffians fled upon four ; that the best thing that they could do, in his opinion, would be to go to bed, and rise the next morning fresh and rested, so as to pursue them to better advantage. The youths looked at each other without saying a word, then went quietly off, to deposit between the sheets their words and thoughts of blood.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONSPIRACY.

Da chi mi fido guardami, Dio ;
Da chi non mi fido mi guardar io.

Iscrizione nei Piombi di Venezia.

May Heaven protect me from my trusted friend ;
From him I trust not, I'll myself defend.

An Inscription in the Prisons of Venice.

M. G. M.



HO will help me ?" asked Rogiero languidly, recovering from his long insensibility. "Who will help me ?"

No one replied to the mournful question. The unfortunate youth lay, without energy to open his eyes, as

one who fears to uncloseth them only upon new troubles. If they had been tangible, external, he might have risen and wrestled with them in deadly strife ; but they existed, torturing him, in the depths of his heart, and he had not strength to stifle them there, and his own life with them. Helpless, he groaned under the insupportable weight; and although his intellect shrank from analyzing the course of past events, still the agony they caused him weighed him down. For the third time, and in a louder voice, he repeated : "Who will help me ?" The sound died away without reaching any compassionate being, who would break the fearful silence ; then he slowly unclosed his eyes ; "darkness there, and nothing more." He stretched forth his hands ; they moved in emptiness.

"They might have killed me, but my death alone is not enough for the cruel ones. Let agony of body first exercise its tyranny, then the keener anguish of the spirit. Let the agonies with which nature has encompassed me be increased by those which my fellow-men heap upon me, one after another, and let them triumph. Let me not escape a single pang of what I am to suffer ; let every stab have its groan, not confused but distinct ; every sting its torture ; let me feel the whole agony of death. This truly is of man !"

He bowed his head, muttering fiercely. After a while, he again moved. This time his hands encountered some object. He took it up ; it was a human bone. He pressed it to his breast as a friend ; he felt it all over, with the joy of a mother stroking her firstborn's hair, then dropped it, murmuring : "Yes ! The bones of one victim will be the tomb for the bones of another !" then taking it again : "Perhaps thou wert more unhappy than I, for the only thing granted without limit to mortals is bitterness. Perhaps thou hadst a father, who shed many tears for thee, but not over thy ashes ; perhaps a mother, who, mad with grief, went seeking thee from cemetery to cemetery, to say a prayer upon thy grave, and found it not. . . ."

His thoughts became, for a time, too agonizing to find vent in words. Suddenly striking his forehead, he added : "And I shall not have Yole ? If she survives . . ."

While he was speaking, a tempest burst over the castle. He clasped his hands, and raised them suppliant to heaven ; but, as he bent in prayer, his knees struck upon the breast of a skeleton, and the ribs broke under him with a crackling sound, that seemed like a wail of sorrow. He did not change his position, however, but still, influenced by the event, began his supplication : " Oh, destroying Power, hear my prayer, the prayer which a creature about to be destroyed offers upon the altar of destruction. The experience of ages teaches Thee that the earth is growing old in years and sin, and that the heritage of crime descends accumulating from father to son ; that there is now not a sacred place where the righteous man can offer prayer, not a stone which has not supported a victim's head, not a clod which is not sprinkled with unavenged blood. The light shines upon open slaughter ; the darkness veils secret treachery ; we are all destined to be, in turn, betrayers and betrayed. If the woman, who, by her first sin, brought death upon her head and ours, could be recalled to life, and from the borders of the tomb could behold the deeds of her cruel descendants, she would shrink back in terror under the stone, for a second time invoking death. Formerly our ancestors assembled in wicked bands, to receive pleasure from " suffering nature," * and applauded fraternal homicide ; but they were called barbarians. Collect, then, Thou who hast the power, all the tempests into one ; let Thy fury be poured out upon all creation ; let the earth be buried under the fragments of worlds that overwhelm it ; destroy man, and all trace of him. The only moment when we can praise Thee, will be when life, trembling upon the last-lip, awaits but a sigh, to fly to where the unborn

* Potè a l'alte patrizie,
Come alla plebe oscura,
Giocosò dar solletico
La soffrente natura.

PARINI, *Ode a Silvia.*

High and low take wondrous pleasure,
Nature's sufferings to measure.

lives dwell ; * and if Thou canst not endure Thy eternity alone, and if Thou rejoicest in prayers, in incense, ah ! do not, I conjure Thee, do not create the wild beast endowed with reason . . .”

Shall we listen longer to this afflicted one ? We have already heard enough to learn how his mind wandered from the right path, and how, tortured with overwhelming anguish, his intellect dimmed, he impiously, or rather foolishly, passed from supplication to curses of the only Power that could assist him.

Ceasing his complaints, he laid himself down again upon the ground, and with the calmness of despair remained awaiting death. Thus passed many hours, when a confused murmur, striking his ear, caused him to spring from the ground and listen. It seemed just over his head. “Perhaps it is only in my imagination,” exclaimed he, touching his forehead ; but his forehead was cool. Listening again more eagerly, he heard the noise distinctly. Trying every step, he groped along with outstretched arms in the direction of the sound ; and as he advanced the murmur grew louder, and apparently of human voices, although he could not distinguish any words ; he hastened forward ; the murmur grew fainter. Retracing his steps, he tried to examine the place. Continuing his search he found that he had passed under a staircase, which, resting upon a half arch, reached from the upper story of the building to the floor of the prison. He groped his way to the foot of it ; it was very narrow, and without a balustrade. Mounting cautiously, and feeling his way, he found at the landing a small bridge, also without any balustrade ; crossing which, he entered a corridor which brought him to a door strongly barricaded. He saw that it was night, for so much light shone through the chinks of the door, from a wood fire within, that his eyes accustomed to the darkness could not at first bear it. Looking for a good place to see through, he found

* Quæris quo jaceas post obitum loco ?
Quo non nata jacent.

a wide crack between the door and the door-post, and perceived about forty people assembled, whom, in spite of their being very plainly dressed, he immediately recognized as noblemen whom he was accustomed to see at King Manfred's court. They were now silent, but from time to time first one and then another would glance with suspicious, impatient looks towards a door opposite to that through which Rogiero was looking.

"It is long past the hour!" one would say to another then; "was not nine o'clock at night the hour fixed for the meeting?"—"Yes."

Just then steps were heard approaching. The knights looked uneasy; not one remained seated; with eyes fixed upon the door, they panted with anxiety to see who would appear; startled at the slight delay, many appeared ready for flight; a few drew their daggers, advancing resolutely, and these were the most timid, although the gesture might betoken the contrary. The door opened: a knight, closely wrapped in his cloak, and with a morion on his head, entered the room. Perceiving the confusion, the drawn daggers, he laughed aloud, opened his cloak, showing himself covered from head to foot with heavy armor, and said: "Put up your daggers, my lords, or you will blunt their points."

"Oh! Is it you?" they all exclaimed. "Our mistrust was not groundless, for we never had to wait for you before, count."

The voice of the new-comer was not altogether unknown to Rogiero, who, observing him more attentively as he came into the firelight, recognized the features of Count della Cerra.

"True," replied the count, "but *the man* trusts us more the nearer he approaches his fate, and this new confidence can be derived only from Providence."

"Speak out boldly, count; where is your master?"

"What master?"

"The count."

"Ah! That is what I was going to tell you, gentlemen. *The man* detains him to concert with him upon the defence of the kingdom. I come in his stead, most noble

barons, to disclose to you the state of affairs. Let that suffice for the present : the arrangements for the future we cannot quite decide upon ; for, as you see, we are not so numerous as we ought to be, and we want him who is, or who calls himself, our head. Our friends convoked with the remaining barons of the kingdom for the next assembly will meet, so far as I have been able to ascertain, between this night and the next day ; but, gentlemen, if no one opposes, you will be able to meet in this same place the following night."

"Unless illness prevents," replied the conspirators, "we promise to be present."

"Now then, you must know that our letters have reached Monseigneur Charles, and that they pleased him beyond measure ; that the pope and the count both encourage us in our undertaking, the former promising us every spiritual assistance in his power, though, to speak the truth, that is not much in the present crisis ; the latter promises us the support of his armies and privileges and franchises, as rewards. Here are the letters that a secret messenger brought us from Rome yesterday night. If you please, barons, we will leave the pope's, both because they are of slight importance and because time presses, for I cannot, without laying myself open to suspicion, absent myself long from court. Let us read those of Monseigneur Charles."

No one could remain quiet. Urged by curiosity all gathered around the Count della Cerra, who, drawing some papers from his breast, chose one, and unfolding it, read : "Charles, etc., etc., to the noble barons representing the kingdom of Naples, to them all collectively, and to each one separately, greeting. We do not know, O noble knights, whether most to congratulate ourselves
• or you, the authority of the Holy Church, and still more our natural affection, inciting us to the aid of all who groan dejected under the weight of impious tyranny ; for you know well how to estimate your sad condition and the purity of our intentions, which instead of resisting, you offer readily to second to the extent of your power. Nor let this seem bitter to you, for you know that ser-

vitute sickens the heart, and weakens the mind : for you only, most noble knights, richly endowed by nature, have been able, a glorious example, to preserve yourselves, in these stormy times, safe and unharmed. If at first, however, about to undertake greater enterprises, we hoped to win greater gratitude, now, since it has pleased God to grant our wishes, we shall obtain greater security. It is always necessary to concede something to the practice of human affairs, and since this decree is inevitable, we esteem ourselves fortunate in being able to yield it out of the glory we would derive, rather than from human blood and betrayed . . .”

“This bombast,” interrupted an old man whom Rogiero could not recognize, “does no good either to soul or body ; it is easy to see that that letter comes from Rome and smacks of Bull’s pen. Pass on to the business part of it, if you please, Count Anselmo ; pass on to the conditions.”

“Just as you please,” replied the Count della Cerra ; and skipping two or three pages he continued : “The world knows well whether the house of France is accustomed to set a price on the heads of its vassals, whether it likes to conciliate or not the respect of the people, the love of the barons, the good-will of all : the world knows if it is covetous of the property of others, rash, uneasy and cowardly—”

“These are praises, Anselmo, not conditions,” interrupted the old man again.

Count Anselmo glanced rapidly over the letter, until he had nearly reached the end ; then he said aloud, “Here is what he promises : Do not doubt but that our gratitude will be commensurate with the benefit. Yours will be the principal offices of the kingdom, yours the magistracies, yours the right of approving the laws ; we will merely assume such authority as you will be willing to grant us, and will consider ourselves satisfied. Let the *royalties* be abolished, the right of imposing taxes taken from the prerogative of the crown, that of abating them preserved. But there is no time to enumerate all the salutary reforms that we meditate, in order to restore happiness to your

delightful country; they will be such as a most affectionate father may grant, such as most loving children may expect."

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed the old man, for the third time, "look, I beseech you, whether it be not sent from the Apostolic Secretary's office, *sub annulo piscatoris!*"

"Hear the end," replied della Cerra, with sudden anger, which he covered immediately with a laugh: "Useless, and perhaps injurious—*injurious*—would it be to assure to you the peaceable possession of your castles, estates and privileges; however, you may not only hope, but look upon it as certain, that we intend to bestow upon you all the grants and immunities by which a son of France can demonstrate his gratitude to the most faithful—"

"A truce to the smooth phrases, count," said the old man, "and pay attention, I pray, to the last sentence of Charles's letter. He betrays himself just at the end; in spite of his fine promises, his intention is certainly to despoil us."

"How?" asked many.

"Oh! it is clear enough. He affirms that he wishes to bestow grants upon us; now as to baronies, he does not bring them from France; it is evident, then, that to give to some he must take away from others . . ."

"Baron," interrupted Anselmo, "you make out the expression worse than it is. Do you think that he would wish to take more, just as he is on the point of gaining a kingdom?"

"A good reason! and when do you suppose that he would wish to, when he was on the point of losing one?"

"Something, baron, must be allowed to faith, something to fame, something . . ."

"Nothing. When these locks" (and the old man touched his hair) "were brown, I too thought as you say; but you do not say as you think, although yours are yet black."

"If gray hairs have taught you only to calumniate your fellow-men, it had been better if you had become bald while they were yet brown."

The bystanders laughed at the repartee ; the old man, undisturbed, waited till the laugh had ended, then replied : " They have taught me to know them ; they have taught me things which you also know, but conceal because it does not suit you to declare them. To cut the matter short, what guarantee does Charles offer for the execution of his promises ? "

" Guarantee ! Can a man who enters peaceably a kingdom which he might acquire by force of arms give a better proof of his good faith ? "

" Faith and reason, my Anselmo, change with the day : it does not seem to me prudent to put ourselves at his mercy. Let us beware where we tread, for we traverse a road upon which we cannot retrace our steps. Let us be cautious while we may, for afterwards it will not only be too late, but foresight may expose us to danger, lamentation to ridicule."

" For my part, I do not see how we can avoid running the risk. What we suffer under *the man* is certain ; what Charles prepares for us is still uncertain. According to the calculations of human prudence, it seems to me that it is worth trying."

" You have evaded all my arguments, Anselmo, but I will not stop to prove to you whether your idea deserves praise or blame. I will again bring forward these same doubts day after to-morrow, for much as I hate *the man*, even more do I abhor infamy."

" When it is without gain, perhaps," muttered Count Anselmo in an undertone. The knight did not hear him, and continued : " Meanwhile I must weep, I know not whether to say at the sad fatality of Italy, or at the base spirit of her citizens, who, to free themselves from one servitude, can devise no better means than to assume another, or to break their fetters with the same iron which they use to form new ones. When, when will come the day in which we can raise to the Créator arms free from every shameful mark of foreign rule ? "

" Nonsense, baron," replied the Count della Cerra, " nonsense ; let us think of ruling, which has ever been the prerogative of us nobles. But, now that I think of it,

it is all very well for you, baron, to love liberty, for by it you will gain an equal division of property. Did not your creditors, ten years ago, make you sell your family fief? Courage, baron! Keep the prince your nephew favorable to Monseigneur de Provence, for he is a king who will restore what the dice have taken from you."

"How! Do you believe . . . ?"

"I believe nothing . . ."

"Burn my soul . . ."

"*Amen.* The things that you propound are sincere, but the time is unfavorable. Be convinced, baron, that men wiser than you or I have thought the same. Poor fellows! their meditations ended in sighs and longings; their acts in voluntary exile, involuntary death."

"Be it as you will, count: think what you please of my real sentiments, but I still hope to see that day."

"When do you hope it?"

"When, every private passion, every individual interest, laid aside, we shall agree . . ."

"Then it will never come for us, for we shall be destroyed; take away self-interest, and what remains?"

Many more arguments were added on either side, which we will omit as irrelevant to our present purpose. Finally, the Count della Cerra, rising, took his cloak, and preparing to go, said to the conspirators: "There is nothing in this world so difficult that a tenacious will and prudent labor cannot make it successful. Farewell, barons: I have been already too long away from court to escape suspicion. I hope that next time you will not expect me too impatiently. Adieu; let us separate with the usual precautions."

Cautious salutations followed. The light was extinguished, but from the noise of footsteps dying away in the distance, Rogiero perceived that they were departing. He waited a little longer, to be sure that there was not one left, and then began to shake the door with the desperation of a man who, every other hope lost, rests his safety upon the accomplishment of one last attempt; he tried every means in his power. Astonishing, almost incredible, were his efforts; still, great as was his active

power, much greater was the passive resistance of the door. He succeeded at last in moving it a little, but that was a very different thing from forcing it open : much as he had accomplished, more than twice as much remained to be done, and just then the fire died entirely out ; exhaustion succeeded to fury. Perspiration poured from his brow, blood from his hands ; overcome by despair and weakness, he abandoned the attempt. The feelings with which he turned away may be imagined. Passing through the corridor, he crossed the bridge, descended the stairs, and sitting on the lowest step, gave himself up to the rush of thoughts and memories which almost overpowered him.

How long he remained in this half-unconscious state, we know not ; but after some time, a sharp pain piercing his eyeballs, summoned his faculties to renewed activity ; but before he had unclosed his lids he seemed to hear these words : " Oh Heavens ! what darkness ! I hoped to see him by the glare of the flames. What shall we do ? Is not hell full of flames ? "

" My lady," replied another voice, " you are not in hell, and he whom you seek is close by. Meanwhile, I pray you, do not hold me so tightly."

" Yes, yes, I will, till I have found him ; for you promised me. You men are treacherous, and I will not be deceived."

" *Santa Maria !*" cried Rogiero, opening his eyes, and quickly closing them again, as if to retain longer an image which he believed a dream ; but finding that he thus lost it, he opened them again to see whether it were indeed external and real. "*Santa Maria !*" repeated the prisoner. " Is it Yole ? "

Yole, dressed in purest white, stood before him. She advanced slowly, holding a dagger in her raised right hand, while with the left she clung to a man bearing a lantern—who, however, could hardly be distinguished, as, either by accident or purposely, he threw all the light upon her. Yole hearing her name, listened as if uncertain, but hearing it again, cried : " Where are you, Rogiero ? " and relinquishing her hold both of the man and the dagger, she extended her arms. . . .

This was the second embrace of these two unfortunates, destined, during their sad lives, to lighten with the semblance of a happiness that they could not really enjoy the weight of the anguish that they were obliged to suffer. Unhappy ones ! who, after so many days of separation, could speak only with sobs, comfort each other only with tears. They remained embraced. Suddenly Rogiero perceived the light fading. If the earth had slipped from under his feet he would not have noticed it, so entirely was he taken out of himself at that moment ; but he perceived the loss of light, because it deprived him of the sight of that face, which comforted him for the past and strengthened him for the future. He looked round, startled ; the man who had conducted Yole there had softly crept away, and was then closing the door, leaving, with the blackest perfidy, the two lovers imprisoned. Rogiero freed himself from those beloved arms, and, either owing to his great speed, or to the trembling of the jailer's hand in committing such a crime, he reached the door in time to prevent his shutting it. The villain, seeing his design frustrated, attempted to fly ; but Rogiero pursued and quickly overtook him, and, seizing him roughly by the throat, dragged rather than led him back into the prison ; here, taking the lantern from his hand, and turning the light full upon him, he recognized the pilgrim. He did not utter a word. Looking down, the shining blade of the dagger which Yole had dropped caught his eye : he took it, hurled the jailer to the ground, knelt on his breast, twined his left hand in his hair, raising the dagger in his right. The Swabian maiden, who had stood till that moment as if bewildered, started, uttered a shriek, and sprang forward to stay his hand, exclaiming : " Wretch ! do you think that I would ever let myself be touched by blood-stained hands ? "

Rogiero raised his eyes and looked at Yole, then at the jailer,—again at Yole. She relinquished her lover's hand. Rogiero understood the gesture, rose to his feet, and spurning the miserable wretch with his foot, as he lay there, cried : " Live, live for more atrocious crimes, for a more infamous death." Without further delay he placed

the dagger in his belt, took the keys, and passing Yole's arm within his own, added : "Come, my beloved, for the innocent can find safety only in flight."

They hastened away. The jailer, although much bruised, rose and followed them to the door, conjuring them for the love of God to take him away with them, or kill him immediately, but not to leave him there to die of hunger. They did not listen to him ; Rogiero thrust him back, and his cries were lost in the creaking of the bolts as they were pushed through their rings. History relates nothing further of his fate ; but a long time after, under the reign of Charles II. *the lame*, that ancient edifice being demolished by order of the legate of the pope, master of Benevento, two skeletons were found in a dungeon, one of which had part of its right hand between its teeth, a proof that the poor wretch perished of hunger ; this we suppose to be that of the jailer.

Yole and Rogiero walked on, without knowing whither, in the darkness of the night ; their arms intertwined, her hand in his, but without being pressed,—without trembling,—in silence,—with equal steps.

"I have called him," began Yole, as if speaking to herself, "with the first glimmering of dawn, before my morning prayer ; I have called him with the last rays of the dying day ; . . . if he had but replied to my eager entreaty ! My life, saddened by an unknown sorrow, was wasted by blinding ignorance,—he appeared to me bright as an angel of light,—the abyss opened before me, and he disappeared like the lightning in a storm."

All Italians, glowing under the too fervid rays of the sun, incline, in speaking and writing, to a certain figurative style, which, belonging peculiarly to the East, is generally called Oriental ; the Neapolitans, and other inhabitants of the Southern provinces, are particularly addicted to it, when any emotion, glad or sorrowful, excites them ; therefore no one will, I hope, think the conversation which our lovers held that night either *affected* or *unnatural*.

"Nor could I," replied Rogiero, gently pressing the hand which he held : "nor could I hear you ; the space

between your lips and my heart was filled by the treachery of man and the curse of God ;—the curse of God, because crime incited me to crime, and in that moment a contaminated soul devoted itself to infamy."

"When the sun shed its treasures of light, when the heavens declared the glory of God, I demanded you of Heaven, with the most fervent prayer of a suffering heart ;—Heaven did not listen to the suppliant. In the storm, by night, amid the howling of the wind, the crashing of the thunder, I betook myself to the necromancers, with their sacrilegious rites ;—Eternal God, absolve me from the sin ! Everything was deaf to the unfortunate !"

"Happy should I have been in any place where justice or mercy could have placed me, could I have been free from the den of wild beasts called men !"

"Where your spirit was, I did not know, but I mourned for you as dead ; there, in the gardens of the Capuan castle, . . . near the fountain, . . . between the gate and the cloisters . . ."

"Where on that memorable night . . ."

"You revealed to me your love, and the Swabian maid listened, there is a mound of earth . . . these hands raised it . . . upon which stands the cross which my sister Constance hung round my neck when she departed for Arragon ; there, every night, I invoked your spirit."

"Ah ! unhappy maiden ! How could you endure such sorrow ?"

"How ! were not you also separated from me ? Had not you also lost me ? If to know it, I must tell you, the attempt would be useless, you would never comprehend it."

"I knew that you were living, but . . ."

"I sank under the stroke ; my intellect gave way, and sorrow reigned triumphant in my heart ; only to-night, after so long a time, I recovered the control of my will, —if indeed," added she, pressing his hand, "it is not still a delusion : but greater than the joy of being free from delirium is the fear of falling again into it."

"Oh ! do not say so ; I should die of grief ;—speak, my beloved, what angel led your steps to your poor Rogiero's prison ?"

"My whole mind was destroyed, save that part of it which answered to your name; I heard Rogiero,—I remember nothing more . . . I awoke in your arms."

"They loved each other so fondly, future ages will say, and loved in vain . . ."

"In vain?"

Rogiero did not reply.

"Is your love one that requires the aid of the Church to preserve it inviolate? That seeks its reward, as a workman does his wages? If it is thus, you did love in vain. . . I received all that love could give when my lips met yours."

Rogiero, gently drawing his arm from Yole's, put it round her, and taking her right hand raised it to his lips; Yole laid her free hand upon his beautiful wealth of hair, and sadly kissed it.

"Be this," she continued, "the crown of love upon the condemned head . . ."

"Condemned!"

"Who can tell how many, preferring gain to ease, are now seeking you from place to place? How many mercenary women pray to the saints, that their lovers or their husbands may obtain the price of your blood? How many hopes, how many fears, depend on your head? Between you and the wild beast of the woods there is but this difference, that the reward for you is the greater."

"My poor Yole!"

"No one defends you, pity itself is silent, the sentence . . ."

"What sentence?"

"Of rebel to the kingdom, of traitor of your king . . ."

"*Santa Maria!*"

"Are you innocent?"

"Can I be? Am I not of the race of Adam?"

"I mean of treachery?"

"I am not . . ." Yole shrunk back. "Yes, away, leave me," continued Rogiero impetuously; "scorn me, hate me; join your equals! . . . here is a stone, . . . cast it at the miserable, . . . all are so! If you knew that there was feigned a victim to be avenged, . . . a crime to be

punished, . . . filial piety, . . . fratricide, . . . if you knew that destiny urged me on with unknown voices, which seemed to proceed from the spirits—dwellers of the earth and air ; . . . that my steps were driven to crime, as the torrent is to the ocean ; . . . that they influenced even my dreams, . . . would you, daughter of earth, could you, condemn me ? Oh ! if there were any one who could descend into the dark depth, weigh the thoughts, and scrutinize the hearts, and stand between my judges and me ; hear my defence, and render justice,—who would dispute with me the prize of patience ? who would take from them the penalty of madness ? Within here,” and Rogiero touched his breast, “eyes of flesh cannot penetrate : ‘the remembrances of men are like ashes, their bodies like bodies of clay :’ the earthly judge pronounces the sentence with anger, because he confounds the crime with the man, and pardon appears to him an injury,—absolution a sin.”

Just then the approaching tramp of horses struck upon the lovers’ ears. “Fly,” cried Yole ; “whatever you may be, we shall be blest, meeting in paradise, or will despair together among the lost. I love you ;” and she quickened her steps ; “if they overtake us, I will defend you, . . . I ! fool that I am ! Can innocence or prayer avail against the pitilessness of avarice ? Mother of God ! they have seen us : . . . hear how rapidly they follow ! . . . they are close upon us. . . . Holy Virgin, protect us ! But I have so often entreated Heaven in vain, let us have recourse to flight. . . . Who will help us to escape from the eagerness of their pursuit ? We are taken !”

“Be firm !” whispered Rogiero, seeing that their pursuers had overtaken them, and boldly advancing, said : “Sir Knights, will you be kind enough to guide me to the palace, for, if I am not mistaken, I can restore the king his daughter.”

“Santo Germano be praised !” replied the captain of the troops ; “we have been seeking her all over Benevento. Princess, the queen, your mother . . .”

“Oh, my poor mother ! Let me go and console her ; but how I can console her, I do not know ; every one I

see turns sadly away ; think what she must have suffered when the sight of me gives her comfort ! ”

“ Sir Knight,” said Rogiero, “ farewell. Princess . . . ”

“ No, Sir Knight, I cannot let you depart unknown ; you must come with me to the royal palace ; I do not wish to deprive you of what the gratitude of my royal master may deign to bestow upon you.”

“ Sir, thank God, I require no other reward for good deeds than the pleasure I derive from them.”

“ I can readily believe you, Sir Knight ; but gratitude may be shown not only with jewels and gold . . . ”

“ Nevertheless . . . ”

“ It is impossible . . . ”

“ But . . . ”

“ I beg it of you as a favor ; do not refuse ; mount my horse, for I must attend the princess, and cannot very well take her up behind me.”

Rogiero, thinking that if he persisted it might excite suspicion, followed the advice of the knight, who ordered his band to fall back a little. They had thus advanced about a hundred paces, when Yole, reflecting upon how much had happened in a few hours, unable to sustain the intensity of her thoughts, or to understand how it had all been brought about, began to wander more wildly than before.

“ Wretch ! ” she cried to the captain who was escorting her, “ you have deceived me with fair words, you are taking me to his execution ; can he not die without me ? Of what use is this additional cruelty ? You do not speak—you are confounded—can you not defend yourself ? I do not ask for his life, for that is sacrificed to your avarice ; but do not compel me to witness his death.”

“ Princess, on my honor as a knight, I am taking you to your mother.”

“ Do you dare to say so ? Silence, do not perjure yourself ! Say that you wish to be cruel . . . I will believe you . . . I cannot injure you : . . . it cannot avail now to falsely call yourself honorable ; . . . how many people ! What a crowd ! ”

“ Where ? ” asked the knight, looking round.

"How many people are flocking to the square, but it is not pity that draws them; . . . do not believe it; . . . they pretend so, . . . but they are morbidly curious—as ready to laugh at the sight of blood, as to weep at the sight of the steps that lead to the scaffold . . ."

"But we are now in the street of San Salvatore."

"It is a festival; . . . the bells are ringing, but no one knows why; perhaps to call God to witness—stop—hush!—woe the sight! See the executioner; his eyes are cast down in token of compassion; but do you not see a gleam of malignant pleasure, a feeling of gladness, at his power to destroy? The word *brother* is on his lips, but do you not see a smile of joy distort his features?"

"Princess, do you not see that it is night? Such deeds are not done in darkness."

"Ah, for pity! The sufferer ascends the steps. . . . I know him. . . . Rogiero! Rogiero!"

Rogiero had listened intently to this conversation, with what anguish may be easily imagined; and now, risking everything rather than leave her uncomfortable, pretending that he wished to speak to the knight, he drew bridle and was quickly at Yole's side. She was not yet free from the frightful vision. He dismounted, and gently taking her hand, said, "I am Rogiero."

The sound of his voice produced the accustomed effect: the afflicted girl recognized him and grew calm. Rogiero wept, and the captain involuntarily raising his hand to his eyes, found the tears rolling down his cheeks; well did he know the state of the case, and perhaps even more than was to be known. Looking more closely at Rogiero, he remembered him, for he had seen him very often; he might gain two thousand *schifati*, that is, nearly fourteen thousand sequins, by denouncing him; no one could blame him, for it would be loyalty to his king; he could also thus obtain favor with Manfred;—but praised be virtue! he abhorred the price of blood, and said to Rogiero, "Squire, if you are guilty, I will not be the one to accuse you; if innocent, to betray you: if you had any base motive for sinning, have now an honorable one for reforming: take my horse and depart; disguise your-

self, and leave Benevento ; at the frontier, times are approaching when, if guilty, you can win reward ; if innocent, honor ; do not hesitate a moment ; you might be lost if you delayed for thanks ; if I am not mistaken, the princess will not detain you."

Yole bowed her pale face in gratitude upon the knight's shoulder, who added : " Away now, hasten."

Rogiero sprang again into the saddle, and bending down to the daughter of Manfred, exclaimed : " My soul is with you !" and disappeared.

Yole sighed, but did not reply ; following her faithful escort, and cheered by a ray of hope, she returned to her mother's arms.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SPY.

Quanta, e qual sia quell'oste, e ciò che pensi
Il duce loro, a voi ridir prometto.
Vantomi in lui scoprir gl'intimi sensi,
E i secreti pensier trargli dal petto.

TASSO, *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

What and how great the host, and what may be
Their leader's thoughts, I promise you to show.
It is my boast his hidden mind to see,
And the deep secrets of his breast to know.

M. G. M.



THE more I think of it, the more suitable it appears to me, that those compositions which are called romances should be likened to "rose-trees in full bearing." Bright with blossoms, most beautiful with their crimson adornments, most delightful from their exquisite perfume, they attract the gaze of the passer-by, who, enchanted, wonders how a flower can have so many of the charms of his loved one's face. The com-

parison gains force, if we consider, that as the rose is surrounded by thorns, so the paths that lead to success are also strewn with obstacles, some difficult to overcome, some impossible. They differ, however, in this, that in passing by the rose-tree we are contented with the beauty of the flower, without caring, partly from want of will, but more from want of power, to study the causes of its birth, its life, or its death. With the romance, on the contrary, it is very different: art teaches us to arrange the events in a strange, mysterious manner, and to present them with as much skill as the poet can devise, so that the emotions of the reader may be excited more and more to the end; but at that very point the greatest care must be taken to unfold the plot naturally, so that he may not be irritated by finding that he has wasted his tears upon trials in nothing appertaining to human nature. This is the labor, this the trial; this to genius is the rock; to mediocrity the abyss; and such certainly it would be to us, were not the events which we are relating true, or at least had we not found them in an ancient chronicle, written on parchment, in Gothic characters, with the capitals illuminated and gilded, which, although a little injured by the moths, rats, and damp, we look upon as a great treasure, as any one will be convinced who will come and see it.

The chronicle relates, that one day, as the Count della Cerra was shut up in his private room, examining some papers of great importance, he heard a knock at the door; asking who it was, he was answered, that a pilgrim, who appeared to have travelled far, was very urgent to speak to him. "A pilgrim? Let him come in," commanded della Cerra. A few minutes after, a man entered, who, first closing the door carefully, went up to the count, and throwing off his pilgrim's dress, showed who he was.

"Gisfredo! You here! You dressed as a pilgrim! Who would have recognized you?"

"Where nature fails, art supplies the deficiency, Sir Count."

"What news? Is that simpleton dead yet? Has your sharpness, joined to his weakness, already destroyed him? Tell me, tell me, I am impatient to know; sit

down beside me ; you will be more comfortable, and I shall hear better."

"Too much honor, my master," replied Gisfredo, bowing, and not wishing to accept the invitation ; but the count insisting, he obeyed, and being hurried again by a most emphatic "Well?" began his narrative :

"My master, since the night when you ordered me so earnestly to watch Rogiero's movements, I, anxious to please you, have never lost trace of him. That same night I met him, when, I know not whether by chance or purposely, he was spurring headlong towards a torrent, where he would have killed himself if I had not stopped him. Trusting to the service I had rendered, I asked for his company, for then I should have been far more sure of him, but he repulsed me angrily. The next day (a cold shiver seizes me when I think of it) a troop of banditti stopped me, and after ill-treating me, and taking away all my money, which I carried in a purse, they were going, at all risks, to *propaginate* me. Both by disposition and by habit I am averse from boasting of what I have done for your lordship ; and then, no matter how much I did, I could never acquit myself of the immense obligations I am under to you, my master ; but I swear—"

"Cut it short, Gisfredo ; you were in danger of your life ? It would have been a great misfortune, truly, if they had killed you ! Are rascals scarce in this world ?"

"Your lordship is right. It is sufficient to know that I was saved."

"I knew it already, for the devil always helps his own."

"Your lordship is right. I followed him with all the ardor of vengeance, all the cunning of cowardice ; as long as he was sufficiently excited by himself, I let him alone ; but as he approached the French army he began to slacken his zeal. This new hesitancy reached such a pitch, that I thought it well to introduce myself into his room by night, and excite him by saying in a sad, ghostly voice : '*Remember your father.*' He crossed the Po with incredible fury, then fell back, worse than ever, into that state of irresolution ; then I thought that I would precede him, and presented myself to Count Buoso, told him that I

was your servant, showed him my letters-patent, and informed him that a Neapolitan courier, with letters addressed to him, was a day's journey behind me, and that he had better send some of his people to meet and escort him, for if he were to fall into the hands of the Ghibellines with those papers upon him, it might do a great deal of mischief. Buoso sent some men, who brought him there. It was dark, and I hid myself in a corridor, to see him as he passed, and I can tell you, my master, the storm of contending passions which rent his soul was an astounding thing to witness; hardly able to stand, he leaned against the wall for support, unable to go either forward or back."

"Do you enjoy describing his despair, miscreant?"

"Think how you would have enjoyed seeing it, my master! Finding that he delayed too long, I crept softly near him, and murmured in his ear, '*Remember your father.*' He turned, and pursued me eagerly, whilst I, familiar with the place, fled from room to room, till I had brought him to the one where Duera was; I then easily slipped away from him. From that time his course was unavoidable; the Ghibelline traitor received the letters..."

"Convert, you mean."

"Convert. The French received theirs, and he remained in their camp till they reached Rome!"

"What! Is he no longer with them?" demanded Count Anselmo with a terrible oath, striking his fist upon the table.

"Listen. At Rome the tournament was announced. Rogiero, and Ghino di Tacco, the most famous bandit in Italy, fought there unknown: I saw them deal such terrible blows as I do not believe were ever equalled, far less surpassed, in the world. Woe to us, my master, if we should ever become the object of them!"

Anselmo changed color, and in a voice less firm than usual, ordered, "Proceed."

"The French were unhorsed, and almost all severely wounded; a Bilmont was killed; De Montfort—De Montfort himself—was declared conquered, and carried away for dead from the field—"

"What matters that? Go on."

"The victory won, Ghino, Rogiero, and their companions escaped; I hastened to follow them at a distance, and saw them enter the forest near Frascati, where Rogiero stayed several days to heal the wounds which he had received. One afternoon, as I was stealing towards the house to gain intelligence, I saw him go alone out into the forest; I might have killed him,—there was not a soul near, and he was unarmed,—but I had no orders, so I gave him the benefit of the doubt, and abstained. Hearing him utter strange words, I softly climbed a tree, and to render him desperate, repeated, '*Remember your father!*' He seemed like a wounded boar; blind with passion, he sought me through the forest, and wandered hither and thither, till just at nightfall he reached the Abbey of San Vittorino: there, my master, a piece of ill-luck was preparing for us all. . . ."

"What?"

"Your soldier Roberto, having become a friar, lay there dying."

"Ah! And he related to him. . . ."

"As a lay brother told me, the whole story of your treachery."

"Treachery! Did you say treachery?"

"It was not I who said it—I am telling you what the lay brother said."

"We are lost!" muttered Count Anselmo, unprepared for the intelligence: "I warned that simpleton of it;—they will commit crimes, and cannot stifle remorse. If I had killed him a day before, all would have been safe." And without thinking, he put his hand to his belt, and drew his dagger. Gisfredo, rising, drew back. They remained silent for several minutes, when finally the count, looking round, said: "Gisfredo, where are you? Come back here; why did you go away?" Then noticing the dagger in his right hand, he replaced it, adding: "Do not fear. Do you not know that you are more necessary to me than any one else?" and he muttered between his teeth, "Your hour is not yet come."

"My master is right; but I can hear just as well standing."

"Do as you please. There is, then, no escape?"

"Cannot you find any? The deuce! Is a head like yours, my master, to be drowned in a goblet?"

"Tell me if you know of anything, for Heaven's sake!"

"I would willingly, but truly I am ashamed to. It appears to me so easy, that you cannot but have thought of it; and then it is not becoming in me, who have learned only grammar enough to take orders, to teach a baron like you, who are deeply skilled in the mysteries of astrology."

"It is not to be denied that my head is somewhat confused to-day,—lately everything has gone wrong."

"Ah! my lord, I know how to make them go right; but you do not, or rather will not."

"That is?"

"Spend freely; you are chamberlain, and can do it, and not with your own money either; in our days people do not work for love."

"Ah! You want money?"

"Not for myself, really, baron; for what can I want of money, when I have your favor? Although, truly, the robbers took all that you gave me. . ."

"I do not know about robbers; but certainly a robber did, when I gave it to you."

"You do not believe it? I swear by. . ."

"Hold your tongue, for an oath in your mouth would be an additional reason for not believing you."

"Well, just as you please; men have often been deceived through too much suspicion. The amount of it is, that I have no more of the money, and to serve you effectually I must have some."

"What need was there of so much circumlocution to come to the point? Here, here are some *agostari*."

Gisfredo extended his hand like one accustomed to such presents, and put them away safely, bowing his thanks, and resumed his former demeanor.

Anselmo added: "You rascal, now that you have them, tell me what you intend to do."

"I protest, my master, that Gisfredo cares as little

for money as a dog for blows ; but what I intend to do for your advantage cannot be accomplished except by money ; times are hard, human nature grows worse every day, and men are such villains that they won't do one a favor until they are paid for it."

"You are both proof and argument."

"Listen, baron. Rogiero, leaving Ghino, will of course go directly to Manfred ; that is certain. Now, as I have learned on the way that the king has convoked the Parliament of the kingdom to meet at Benevento in a few days, his route must necessarily be to that city ; my advice, then, would be for me to set out immediately with fifteen or twenty brave men, lie in wait for him, and make him food for the wolves."

"San Germano !" exclaimed Count Anselmo, striking his forehead, "so true is it, that to see clearly what is near, one should be short-sighted ! What you say is good, but only in part. In the first place, you must take fewer men with you, so as not to excite suspicion, and instead of taking bandits you must stop at Count Caserta's castle on the way, and bear an order from me to the governor, who will furnish you with three or four soldiers—not more, I command you—and take care that they do not wear the livery of Aquino : as to killing him, it seems to me that that is not good counsel ; what do you think ?"

"Ah ! Do what you please : I have given my opinion ;—dead men tell no tales."

Count Anselmo reflected for some time, and then continued : "No, no ; that bloody corpse,—on the highway,—just at the time of the assembling of Parliament,—a squire,—a deserter,—under sentence, would make it seem more important, and would induce them to search into the matter more than it is really worth. Try to take him alive ; if you cannot, why, kill him, but bring his body away with you, remove every trace, and bury it where it cannot be found. Go, and make all possible haste."

He departed. The reader already knows what he did, and the result ; for Gisfredo, finding that he could not kill Rogiero without danger, brought him insensible to

Benevento, where, finding Count Anselmo, who had arrived there before the court, he put him, by his orders, into the dungeon of the Roman legate's palace, which had long been deserted, and which, through neglect, was partly in ruins. The count intended him to die of hunger, not, like Gisfredo, from desire of his death, but to save the expense of keeping him alive.

Having fulfilled his commission, Gisfredo returned to the dwelling of Count Anselmo, and said, "That is done, baron ; our young gentleman will become a saint, and perform miracles ; he is already in the cloister ; at present all that is wanting is to lock the door and to throw the keys into the Calore, and all is finished." *

"Let us think of something else : but find some priest to say a mass for him, so that his soul may not accuse us, and may know that we have behaved like good and loyal Christians ; for the rest, we leave him to God."

"You are right, my master," replied Gisfredo, half in irony, half in earnest, not knowing exactly which Anselmo intended. Seeing a slight smile on the count's lips, he added, laughing : "I will say the mass myself ; I am certain that some one in the other world, either above or below, will hear it."

"You will certainly come to some dreadful end, Gisfredo, you are so wicked ! I am now about to intrust a more delicate charge to you, and one fully worthy of your talents : lay aside that pilgrim garb, put on the livery of my house, and go to court ; you will not be noticed, or if you are, as my servant you will also be respected ; associate with Manfred's people, keep an eye upon the ministers, the king, the queen, every one ; mark their movements, their words, their looks, and if you can, even their thoughts ; be faithful to me ; remember that my fall would be accompanied by your ruin, my elevation by your advantage."

* The Calore is a river near Benevento. The author alludes to the fate of Count Ugolino, who, with his four children, was starved to death in the tower *Muda*, in Pisa. It was the Archbishop Ruggieri who had them locked into that tower, and had the keys thrown into the Arno. See Dante, *Inferno*, XXXIII.

Gisfredo executed the orders of his master, partly (and here he was mistaken) in the hope of receiving some great reward, and partly from inclination. He entered court, and, like the crafty knave he really was, appeared, now fawning, now haughty, here exercising courtesy, there villany, withdrawing and reappearing at suitable times, flattering the roughest of the barons by servility, gaining over the most quick-witted of the servants with a few *agostari*, and succeeded in a few hours in learning more than any one else would have discovered in as many years. In spite of his cunning, however, destiny, which so often opposes generous deeds, had decreed that his evil ones should prove fatal to him : those which we have related have already exposed him, as we have seen, to much danger ; we shall now learn how the last, in which he lost his life, was brought about.

The family of Manfred, wearied with the exertions of the day, had sought that sleep which for a long time had not descended uninvoked upon their eyelids. Gisfredo, with careful, stealthy steps, and attentive ears, had, to make himself more useful to Count Anselmo, penetrated into the most retired of the royal apartments. The fates led him on : he enters a long passage, feeling his way, and walking on tiptoe ; hardly daring to breathe, he passes through it, reaches a large hall, leaves the wall which has hitherto guided him, and goes forward ; he has scarcely reached the centre of the room, when a repressed groan warns him that there is some one there ;—he stops, a female voice wails through the vast apartment.

“Can he,” cries the mourner, “can he have pretended an affection? Has the demon taught him to feign a passion, to wither my heart, destroy my intellect, and consume my life? Were they all feigned, his courteous acts, his long homage, his look, his voice, his embrace, his kiss—all false? Were not his words frenzied with love, did he not tremble, not sigh deeply? And yet he has left me alone in this path of sorrows : the thought of parents, of heaven itself, cannot console me ; my passion is stronger than they. Let me at least be assured

of his death, that I may know where to direct my complaints ; if the grave hold his body, at least may it leave his soul free—or rather let it still retain it, that he may leave it for a moment to tell me that he did not feign—that he did love me :—but a moment, and then eternity may claim him. Life,—life is in the blood, and his blood has been shed. Oh, that I had his corpse ! I would watch it as if he were sleeping ; I would deceive myself, saying : ‘ Presently he will wake.’ And since he could not be united to me in life, I would stay beside his bed, waiting with resignation to be united to him in death. I would warm his cold lips with kisses, I would pour balm into his wound,—Good Heavens ? What a wound ! deep, directly through his breast,—it is mortal,—tell me the truth, is it incurable, master ? * He does not answer me,—he weeps,—and you too weep, Gismonda. O Rogiero ! who slew you ? Rogiero ! ”

She rose hastily, and came rapidly forward towards Gisfredo,* who, retreating with less than his usual caution, stumbled over a footstool with a great noise : the accident confused him, and he lost the direction of the door ; groping for the wall, the more he sought it, the farther he went from it. Yole (for Yole it was who was thus lamenting), furious at the interruption, sprang forward and caught him by the breast,—her hand struck upon the hilt of a dagger. Still holding him fast, she drew it, and threatening to bury it in his breast, cried : “ You killed him ! God has thrown you in my way that I may avenge him.”

The present danger, no less than the worse impending, if that cry of Yole’s should bring any one to her aid, so cowed Gisfredo, that by accident, rather than with any real intention, he replied, “ Have pity, my lady ; your Rogiero is alive.”

“ Alive ! ”

“ I swear it by all the saints in paradise.”

“ Alive ! ”

“ Yes, alive and well as you are, my lady.”

“ It is not true ; you are deceiving me.”

* The title given to physicians in those times.

"Do you not believe in the saints?"

"I believe in them—but in you, no . . ."

"But he is alive . . ."

"Then lead me to him, and until I see him, do not hope that I shall release my hold of you, or remove this dagger from your throat."

"Holy Virgin! We shall be seen, my lady, we shall be stopped; you will ruin us both; you will never see Rogiero again; to-morrow, I swear to you . . ."

The Swabian maid, infuriated by passion, pricked him slightly, at which Gisfredo nearly fainted with terror, and in a stern voice ordered, "Lead on, and be silent."

Gisfredo, seeing that there was no time to devise means of escape, and that nothing could save him but honest dealing, prepared, though sorely against his will, to act honestly:—it seemed as if, even when he really endeavored, he had not the power to do what he ought; his limbs themselves seemed to become involuntary traitors. The Swabian maiden held him tightly, and often, suspecting him, gave him a slight prick. He would utter a low "Ah!" and for a few steps would give her no cause for suspicion; then again would do worse than before. Thus they reached the court: two sentries were pacing up and down before the great gate; to pass through it without being seen, was impossible. There is no royal palace without secret doors, by which, as Giuseppe Parini writes, truth sometimes enters. Yole remembered, just in time, that there was one in the building where they were. She drew Gisfredo to it, almost by force; and thus they reached the open air. What happened afterwards, the reader has already learned.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DESPAIR.

Visibilmente si tramuta in faccia,
 E trema d'una larva che il minaccia.
 GROSSI, *I Lombardi, alla Prima Crociata.*

His features a visible change betrayed,
 And trembled his limbs at a threatening shade.
 M. G. M.



ANFRED!—In the time when, if his confidence in his own wishes was rash, much greater were the will of men and the vicissitudes of events to uphold him; borne on “by fortune’s favoring gale,” we have not attempted to describe him: now, in the dark hour of adversity, the heart is moved by sensations that no one, however magnanimous, would wish to repress; there arise in the depths of the mind thoughts that no one, however exalted, could call base. The Power that rules the destinies of the world has willed that to attain the reputation of greatness, the exercise of virtue—that is, what we call virtue—is unnecessary. Nor let any one boldly question this opinion, for we will ask him, if that was virtue which led the ancient father to support by the labor of his hands his numerous family, and both by precept and example to bring them up in the love of their fellow-men, and in the fear of GOD. And when he assents, we will ask him again, why hardly a passing whisper of memory breathes of him in the village where he dwelt? Why the piety of his grandchildren searches the church-yard in vain for a sign, a cross, a stone, to distinguish him from the crowd of dead? Why, instead of having rose-trees growing on his grave, does the over-worked horse of the parish priest eat away the few wild flowers with which nature adorns it? Then we shall see if he will affirm that it is virtue which incites part of the human race to smite the other part with the sword; vir-

tue, to persecute the innocent because they are weak ; to look upon their weakness, consequent upon their innocence, as a crime, and punish and scorn it. Virtue,—avaricious rapine, terrible conflagrations, base crimes ! Virtue, that the husbandman, driven out by soldiery, should be compelled to flee with his family, bearing one child in his arms and leading another by the hand, while his wife supports the daughter, their pride in the smiling days of peace (for a mother's pride is in her beautiful children), but for whom, now overwhelmed with misfortune, she prays for death, from the mercy of the Lord ! Wretched man ! his road leads to the mountain ; those precipitous cliffs promise nothing but the labor of climbing them ; there he may find an asylum, for there there is no booty. Half-way up the ascent, he turns to see once more the cottage, dear by so many memories of love,—dear also by memories of sorrow. Alas ! it is no longer to be seen ; bitter tears fall from his eyes, he groans deeply, but the groan and the tear are not for his burnt home, his ruined harvest, his possessions, obtained with difficulty and long toil, now in one short hour destroyed. He mourns for his native air ; for the place where first the beloved maiden, suffused with modest blushes, told him that he did not love in vain ; where he was first saluted by the name of father. He mourns for his parents' ashes ;—his timid thought, glancing forward to future years, does not fear the bitterness of begging of the stranger for bread which will be refused, nor of hearing added to the refusal the sharp words of a heart which alleges vice as a pretext for not being moved to pity ;—it fears only the image of his grandchildren, who, hardly able to lisp their questions, will say to him, "Lead us where your father sleeps." What can he reply ? "I have deserted him !" The reproach of undutifulness rends his heart ; can he complain if they abandon him alive, he who abandoned his father dead ? Living or dead, is the head of a father less sacred ? He turns, hastens along, raises his eyes towards the mountain-top, eager to place the rock between himself and the sight and thought of such misery. And

if such oppression is not virtue, why do those who hold the empire of fame clothe it with the brilliancy of song, or send it down to posterity with the monument of history? Why in your halls, on your armor, even upon your breasts, do I see only images of the latest conqueror? Oh, men have become so cowardly, that they have made a god of violence, or—and perhaps this is more true—they have never known what virtue is.

Manfred was not virtuous,—he was great. Excluded by his father's crime from the inheritance of power, he made its acquisition the object of his every hope. Between him and the sceptre stood four lives, all sacred. He stretched forth his hand and seized it. What were the arguments which the ambitious one employed? The shadow of the throne conceals them, but they stand like enemies drawn up in battle array before his soul and before God. He destroyed his enemies, first by fraud, then by victory; and after debasing them by bribery, he slew them with the sword. Trusting in the destiny which led him on, he overruled fortune and events. Not satisfied with the crown of Naples, he looked upon Italy, saw her divided, and formed the design of bringing her under his sole command. Penetrating into the mysteries of the future, he beheld her the prey of the foreigner, and determined to prevent such a consummation; nor, since Alaric had devastated the beautiful country, had any one but himself seemed chosen by Heaven for the vast enterprise; in him were wisdom in council, personal prowess, a wonderful power of conciliating affection, and a tempering mildness, unknown to his proud forefathers. Rome had somewhat fallen from her power; the Italians either trusted him, or were but little jealous of him, looking upon him as their natural sovereign, and as one whose interests were entirely separate from Germany. Tuscany was Ghibelline, governed by the wisdom of Farinata; Lombardy mostly devoted to his name, through the influence of Pelavicino, Duera, and the arms of Giordano Lancia. He for the times, the times for him; it may be thought that he would have governed with absolute power; perhaps, elated by success, with tyranny; but the work was

to unite Italy : that done, whenever oppression was attempted by one person, one single blow would be sufficient to destroy it ; and if every age does not produce one wise man, every one can count many desperate ones.

Alone, in the vast hall adorned with the portraits of his ancestors, upon a couch of Moorish workmanship, sat Manfred, his face buried in the pillows ; save for a gasping sob, which from time to time shook his frame, he might have seemed asleep. We know not what thoughts were passing through his mind, but they must have been such as bring anguish, even upon the softest pillow. He rose hastily, took two steps forward and stopped, resting his right hand upon the table for support, his eyes motionless and fixed upon the ground, his lips quivering ; the blood ebbed and flowed upon his face like the waves of the sea, now flushing in crimson, now leaving it perfectly pallid. He turns with a start, fixing his eyes upon that part of the room which the rays of the silver lamp upon the table hardly reach, and seems about to flee ; summoning up all his courage, he advances,—stops,—retreats a step,—then rushes desperately forward, and with trembling hands touches the cause of his terror. To his heated fancy, the insufficient light changes every object to images which he cannot bear. Finally, he raises the lamp to blow it out, but in the very act his restless glance falls upon some new object which thrills him with horror. He extends the hand which holds the lamp, advances it to the wall,—it is a sword which is hanging there. He sighs, again raises the light towards his mouth, looks again and again round the room, then with a great effort blows upon the light, and it is dark. Through the darkness sounds his rapid, excited, irregular step.

We know not whether it is so elsewhere, but in Italy it certainly happens that a storm often recurs for several days at a particular time, until it ceases entirely. So now, as on the previous evening, the distant thunder begins to sound, and the lightning to flash with ever increasing fury. "The hour approaches !" murmurs Manfred. The wild south wind rises, the full force of the storm bursts over the building, shaking it and seeming about to shatter it.

He listens to the distant gusts that make the doors and casements rattle ; the hail strikes sharply upon the windows, as if it would break them, or driving them from their frames, carry them Heaven knows where. Holy Mary ! it seems like the day of judgment ! Why does Manfred traverse the room with trembling steps ? Does he fear that that convulsion of the elements is a war that nature has declared against him ? What is he muttering between his teeth ? Saints of Paradise ! he is invoking the powers of darkness. The storm still rages ; he makes the sign of the cross, and hesitatingly looks up. A flash of lightning shows him that he has unconsciously directed his glance towards the portrait of his father Frederick ; that red glare appears to animate it for a moment with life—the picture certainly rolls its bloodshot eyes, and frames with its lips words of fire. Woe to Manfred if that sight had lasted longer than the lightning flash ! His brain would have given way, his heart burst. The darkness hides the cause of his terror ; the thunder breaks immediately with a tremendous crash, and in the midst of the reverberation Manfred shouts, “The hour is past !” Unable longer to support himself, almost fainting, staggering like a drunken man, he went towards the couch, and as he sank down upon it, his right hand struck upon the royal crown, from which he hastily withdrew it, as if he had touched a burning coal ; and truly the sensation must have been such, for he cried, “It burns.” Then, like one laboring up a steep mountain-path, he sighed heavily and often. A cold perspiration poured down his cheeks.

Borne by the wind, now swelling as it rose and now dying away with it, bringing comfort, even pleasure, to the afflicted one, came the sweet sounds of a soft prelude upon the lute. At first, groaning under the weight of his mental suffering, he gave no heed ; but when there was added to it a voice melodious with secret sadness—a voice which, like the lightning’s flash, penetrated, aroused and excited, so many pleasant memories and sweet tenderness stole softly into Manfred’s heart, that he slowly bowed his head upon his hands and wept. They were tears such as

furrow the cheek, such as are like drops of oil upon red-hot iron,—but he wept. Thinking that nothing else could console him so much as hearing more plainly the voice which had so soothed him, he rose, and leaving the room, went in the direction of the sound.

Queen Elena, having dismissed all her maidens, had retired to her private apartments with her children, Yole and Manfredino; there they had united in prayer to the Lord for pardon and peace. Just as the prayer was concluded, the storm burst. Elena made as light as she could of the sinister omen, and by her cheerful looks and words encouraged Yole, who clung to her, and Manfredino, who, seated upon a footstool at her feet, had taken one of her hands, and put it before his eyes to shut out the lightning.

“Courage, my children,” said the queen; “is this the first storm you ever heard? Is such terror becoming in the children of a king?”

“What, my mother?” replied Yole; “should not even kings tremble before God?”

“They should, but it would be too much, my daughter, to attribute every tempest to the anger of Heaven.”

“Did you notice, mother, that we had hardly uttered the last word of our prayer when the thunder crashed?”

“I did not observe it, for my mind was absorbed in the thoughts of paradise.”

“It seems to me,” added Yole, lowering her voice, and speaking in her mother’s ear, “it seems as if God had abandoned us.”

“My daughter,” replied Elena, in a tone of affectionate reproof, “not even the saints have penetrated the secrets of the Eternal; if the prophets knew them, it was because He Himself revealed them to their spirits,—not otherwise. Rejoice then at affliction sent by the Lord,—He wishes to prove us, and they who are proved are among the number of the elect. Do you remember, my dear child, St. Ambrose of Milan, who, coming to Mantua, asked the host concerning his worldly affairs, and receiving the reply: ‘I am rich, in good health, have a handsome wife, a fine family, am esteemed, honored and

revered by all, have never known what it was to be ill or sad, but always have lived and still live contented and happy,' ordered his servants to saddle the horses, saying, 'God is not in this place, nor with this man, for He has granted him too much happiness.'* And then what does King David say? 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.' But let us turn our thoughts from such mournful contemplations. The angels taught harmony to mortals to soothe their sorrows." So saying, she drew away the hand that Manfredino held, and gently patting his cheek, ordered: "Go, Manfredino, and bring me the lute which is upon that table."

The boy raised his eyes, and hesitatingly looked at her.

"Go, Manfredino," insisted the noble Elena; "are you perchance afraid?"

The boy went with brave steps to the table, upon which stood several instruments, took the lute, and handing it to the queen, said, "Here, mamma, is the lute."

"Thanks, my son."

"Oh! is there need of thanks for such things, mamma?"

"Why not? If it was your duty to obey me, it was courtesy in me to thank you."

"Now, since you are so good, will you grant me a favor?"

"What favor?"

"Promise me first that you will grant it."

"Has Queen Elena ever refused her children when they have asked for anything worthy?"

"Then you have granted me that you will play the ballad of Lucia, and Yole will sing it; it is so beautiful, the ballad of Lucia, that, when I hear it, tears come to my eyes. Why is it, mamma, that it makes me cry?"

The queen ran over with skilful fingers the chords of her lute, drawing forth most sweet accords, so as to avoid replying to him; but she could not help murmuring to her-

* PASSAVANTI, *Specchio della Vera Penitenza*.

self: "Alas! sorrow has become the inheritance of the house of Manfred; even those who know not what it is, love sorrow; their soul forebodes the suffering that is to come." And continuing her prelude:

"Yole, my daughter," she said, "sing the ballad of Lucia."

"Oh, mother! how can I? my voice is so hoarse . . ."

"From sighing? and is it not a sorrowful ballad that you are to sing? it will better suit your subject."

Without saying more, they began to bring to a unison the voice and the lute. There arose a soft insisting sound on the same note, of that kind which the Greeks call *melody*. It moved the soul of the listeners as does the joyful glittering of the light on the surface of the waters of a lake, a peaceful rest, an inspired sweetness . . . fool! what mortal language is able to reveal the mysteries of harmony?

A door opens; the three fixed their eyes on that point. Manfred, contrary to his habit, for he always wore green garments, was dressed in deep black, so that his body was hardly visible through the open door. His face was pale and wan, his hair standing on end, his eyes staring fixed, as a man just awakened from a frightful dream. They screamed, terror-struck, and fearing that something dreadful had happened to him, his children rushed towards him.

"I will defend myself!" exclaimed Manfred, carrying his hand to his belt; "you wish to murder your father, as . . .—it becomes you to condemn me? crime is not obliterated by crime:—will revenge be eternal in my house?"

"Father! husband! father!"

Indeed, those names must strike powerfully on the heart of man, for they were able to recall Manfred from his terror, and make him rejoice in the sight of his family. Manfredino embraced his knees; Yole kneeling seized his hand, and impressed upon it tender kisses; Queen Elena extending her arms invited him as to a safe refuge; overcome by the fulness of his emotion, he kissed his

son, raised and kissed Yole, and flew to the arms of his beloved wife.

Having drank from the cup of family joy, Manfred said: "And I have faith that destiny sends sorrow to me, in order that I may intoxicate myself in the sweetness of your kisses, my beloved ones; and if it is so, I have cause to bless it, rather than complain. But here, if I mistake not, I heard singing. Ah! share with me your pleasures: I came desirous of harmony; it does my spirit good."

Queen Elena and Yole did not reply, except by one resuming her lute and the other repeating in undertone the notes of the song. When they were in accord, Yole began thus:

"O listening maidens, silent be,
But let your pitying teardrops run,
To hear my song of misery;
The mournful ballad is begun.

In days of yore a cavalier,
Led on by chance or fancy's spell,
A convent's windows wandered near;
Deep in his soul sweet music fell.

He raised his head, and there alone,
Lucia, blooming maiden, knelt;
Serene in heavenly rays she shone,
The knight love's tender influence felt.

No more he saw her, but in vain
Oft lingered near that lovely spot;
When hope's last breath had died in pain,
He welcomed a crusader's lot.

He fought for Christ in Palestine,
And many a valiant deed had shown;
At length, betrayed by fate, must pine,
In cruel chains, in dungeons lone.

The long-desired maiden's name,
As death drew near, he called once more;
Soft slumber to his eyelids came,
He woke and found his pains were o'er.

In brightly shining garments clad,
 There at his feet Lucia stood ;
 Was it a living form she had ?
 For from her cheek had fled the blood.*

‘ Lightly on angel wings I come,
 From near God’s throne to succor thee.
 Patient, within thy native home,
 Live, till heaven’s kiss shall set thee free.’

O listening maidens, silent be,
 But let your pitying teardrops run ;
 No more I sing of misery ;
 The mournful ballad now is done.” *

M. G. M.

Manfredino, who at the beginning of the song had seated himself again on his stool, and listened with elbows on his knees supporting his chin, saw his father, who, rapt with the sweetness of the song, softly approached his daughter, placed an arm over her shoulder, and leaned his forehead on it ; his lips curved into a smile, his brow cleared. That expression, though, ceased with the song, the smile disappeared, his brow contracted ; he carried his hand to his heart, as if something had escaped from it, then he exclaimed : “ Listen to me now.” He went resolutely towards the table, took a harp, made in the shape of a triangle, and began to play ; he sought with very rapid motion now the grave, now the acute chords ;

* This story of Lucia is related by Ghirardacci in his *Stories of Bologna*. Lucia, a most beauteous maiden, had become a nun ; one day a Bolognese youth, seeing her behind the gratings where she was listening to mass, fell desperately in love with her. The modest maiden, noticing the love of the youth, never appeared again at the gratings ; the youth, in despair, went to fight with the Crusaders in Palestine, where, taken prisoner, and condemned to die, he invoked the beloved maiden ; he fell asleep, and at his awaking he found himself at Bologna, in the church of the convent where dwelt Lucia, and she was at his side ; the youth asked her whether she was alive, and she replied, yes, but of the true life. She then ordered him to deposit his weapons on her tomb, and thank the most Blessed Virgin for the grace which he had received. The miracle happened in 1200.

the middle ones that sweeten and soften the passages he never touched; it was a dissonance like the roaring of wild beasts, the wailing of suffering persons—it tore the ears; it seemed as if the strings would snap at the stroke of his fingers; you might fear at every moment the instrument would coruscate and send forth sparks; and certainly art did not guide his quick hand, but rather a convulsive motion. At the moment when that fierce harmony increased in force, Manfred with a full voice began :

“Of treachery, woe and slaughter I will sing in doleful verse,
While heaven and nature shudder at the story I rehearse.

On a gloomy skull harsh-smiting stood an angry cavalier;
A serpent, issuing from it, hissed through the meadow near.

Speak, cursed spirit! speak, again the knight persistent cried:
At last from out the fleshless jaws a hollow voice replied:

I am thy ancestor, it said, and of old Alfred's race,
I had a brother, brave in fight, and famous in the chase,

Endowed with wondrous strength of limb, and beautiful to see,
As is the vision of the soul's delirious fantasy.

A damsel to our castle came, trembling in fear and flight;
My father to his eldest son would wed the maiden bright.

But unto me the wayward one her sudden passion told,
And dost thou love me too? she cried; can'st thou indeed be bold?

Then take this vial, it can change our woful lot to bliss.
But lady, what is this strange draught? A deadly poison 'tis.

And should they drink who cross our love, they'll not molest us more.
Then o'er the horrid banquet a spousal oath we swore.

I was a parricide, half blind with horror and affright,
Trembled the roof above us, quenched was the torches' light.

But she was mine. To depths of hell we dragged each other down;
United still, in endless flames our fearful crimes we own.

And lest the traveller on the plain should climb the mountain's crest,
And my deserted castle seek for shelter and for rest,

The pious herdsman points it out, and tells my tale of shame,
But first devoutly crosses him, and breathes the holy name.

- My memory still renews its blight, no rest my spirit knows,
My homeless head from rock to rock the windy tempest throws.

Of treachery, woe and slaughter I have sung in doleful verse,
And I who wrought them suffer still, 'neath God and nature's curse."

M. G. M.

The last verse of the ballad was sung in such a low voice, that no one of the listeners was able to hear it. The harp fell from the hands of Manfred, and striking on the pavement, was broken ; he, overcome by the effort, fell upon a chair. His children, his wife, ran to him, and overwhelmed him with sweet caresses ; no one, though, dared to console him with words ; perhaps a secret feeling warned them that his sufferings were beyond consolation. A solemn silence ensued.

A light knock at the door aroused them from that sorrowful state. Manfred, jealous of his family's secrets, ordered them to draw aside, passed his hand over his brow as if to remove every trace of suffering, and thus composed to a royal attitude, said with a firm voice, "Come in."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SURPRISE.

—E fino a quando il giogo
Soffrirem di un tiranno?—

Sappiasi al fine

Che voi suo valor siete, e sua fortuna,
E che, sdegnati voi, Giovanni è un vinto

GIOVANNI DI GISCALA, *Tragedia*

. . . How long shall we
A tyrant's yoke endure?—Now must he know
That you his valor are, and you his fortune,
And John without your aid is overcome.

M. G.M.



YOU here, Alberico?" said Manfred, perceiving the captain of the guard, who, putting his head through the half-opened door, seemed desirous of a new summons to enter. "Come in, Sir Alberico."

"My king!" replied the captain, advancing half-way into the hall, where, bending low, he saluted in turn the royal family.

"What brings you here, Alberico? Speak;" and Manfred said these words in a friendly tone, for the times looked threatening, and he felt, more than ever, the necessity of keeping his officers faithful.

"My king, a knight has come to the palace who demands with great earnestness permission to speak to your Serene Highness.* I told him that it was not convenient, but he insisted, alleging it to be a matter of life and death."

"His name?"

"He was not willing to give it, neither would he show

* The titles "Your Majesty," "Sire," were first used by kings, 300 years after the epoch of this story, by Charles the Fifth of Spain.

his face ; besides, he wears foreign armor, and keeps his visor down ; but he carries no deadly weapons."

"Who asked you if he had deadly weapons? Where is he?"

"I introduced him into my own apartment, that he might not be seen."

"Elena, Yole, Manfredino, adieu. You see what is the glory of a throne,—it asks even those few happy moments which every man finds in the bosom of his family ; but it is a great weight which destiny has imposed upon our shoulders, and which we must bear till death. Be of good cheer ; in a short time we hope to return to your arms. Come, Sir Alberico."

Perhaps in speaking thus Manfred disguised his real feelings. Perhaps he spoke sincerely, since it is human nature, that the object attained, deprived of desire and hope, falls short of the expectation, and the labor of the attainment is not compensated by the joy of the acquisition.

Reaching the door of the captain's room, Manfred commanded him to stand without and watch to prevent the entrance of any one. He advanced quietly. A knight of noble presence, his visor down, leaning upon the back of a chair, appeared buried in thought. Roused by the noise of footsteps, he looked up and saw Manfred ; he hesitated at first, as if undecided. At last, taking courage, he advanced hastily, and bending upon one knee, said in an agitated voice, "My king!"

"Rise, Sir Knight, rise ; will you permit us to know who thus presents himself before us? May we also know to what we must attribute the pleasure of listening to you?"

"My king, if your well-known generosity does not make me too bold, I would beg you to allow me to remain unknown. What I have to tell you is neither service nor favor, but that which the law commands ; and yet I know that you will offer me a recompense ; and should it please you so to do, let me take it in advance, by being permitted to remain with my visor down."

Manfred thought for a moment, and then replied :

"Be it as you wish ; you have come into our presence unarmed, which you need not have done. May no one ever repent of having trusted to the honor of a Swabian."

"Many thanks !" replied the knight, touching his heart ; then in a louder voice he added : " My King, you are betrayed."

" We know this, Sir Knight."

" What ! Do you know who are conspiring against the throne ?"

" We know that our subjects are men, and that we have always endeavored to make them glorious."

" Not all would betray you, and many would give their lives for you."

" The hour of trial has not yet come."

" It will come."

" Then we shall see the faith, now we see the treason. Sir Knight, have you nothing more to tell ?"

" Yes, indeed."

" Speak."

" In your kingdom, in this city even, at this very moment, the greater number of the Neapolitan barons are plotting against your life."

" What do you say ? Take care . . ."

" Are conspiring against your life."

" It is not possible."

" May falsehood be spoken in a king's presence ?"

" How can you prove the accusation ?"

" Easily, thank God."

" How then ?"

" By leading your Serene Highness this very moment to the place of meeting."

" Truly ?"

" Come."

" Cowards ! Fools !" cried Manfred, striking the table heavily. " They think to escape the name of cowards by the deeds of traitors ; they mean to ruin us at any sacrifice, and they only ruin themselves. Then in the depths of misery they will regret our loss, when we shall be no more ;—the usual reward of the good is to be hated in life, and mourned after death. Indeed we are

sorry for them ! Oh, my great designs ! Oh, my hopes ! Oh, my vain vigils of thought ! Truly, Italy seemed dead, yet I trusted to find at least a spark of life preserved in her heart. I dared to stretch forth my hand to ascertain if it were so ; and have withdrawn it with the sad certainty that she has long been frozen in the ice of death. Italy is dead, dead forever.—Captain ! Captain ! Let my esquires armed and mounted be in the court-yard ready to escort me ; go, hasten, and be discreet.”

While these events were transpiring in the royal palace of Manfred, Count Rinaldo di Caserta, at a nocturnal meeting of all the conspiring barons, was explaining to them with admirable clearness the plans which had so far terminated prosperously, and others which he designed to undertake for the accomplishment of the desired end. All that we have before related of Count della Cerra was fully known to the Count di Caserta, but either because he was more closely occupied than before near Manfred, or by his haughty disposition which detested those minutiae which every undertaking, however great it may be, involves, he left all the trouble to della Cerra. The reader must sharpen his intellect to distinguish between the dispositions of these two counts, for Rinaldo di Aquino was a noble knight, and a courteous doer of all honorable deeds ; a terrible thirst for vengeance had perverted his good qualities. Carried away by the impetus of his passions, more than by deliberate purpose, he had tasted the fruit of crime, and he had now entered upon a rough path, which he knew not how to abandon ; nor, indeed, did he wish to do so, for it was the only one that could lead him to his object. The Count della Cerra had come into the world with the disposition of *Truffaldino* ; not only did he perform no honest deeds himself, but he could not understand them in others, and charged with folly all who did differently from himself. He loved no one ; nor did he hate any one in particular. He hated all ; he had long served di Caserta, because he had found his advantage in so doing, but was ready to betray him, should that advantage cease, or if some greater good could thus be gained. He justified treason on these

grounds. When two men—so he reasoned—make a compact, it is certain that each one promises to the other such advantages, as alone, or accompanied by any other man, he could not obtain ; but if one side ceases to present these advantages, and is consequently deserted by the other, the want of faith is not in the latter, but in the former, who has failed in the condition of mutual usefulness—the principal condition of the first agreement. In short, not to delay any longer, for the hour is late, and the way long, no head was ever baptized in this world that would do more honor to the noose than his.

Rinaldo, continuing his oration, said to those present : “ Behold, Providence sends you the destined moment, so long desired by you, and hastened by so many vows ; we are now here to see what we shall do. Already the victorious armies of Charles are spread throughout the country ; they are trying to cross over the Garigliano to Castelluccio and Cepperano ; already are they prepared to take Gaeta by storm ; the pope’s blessing, the valor which springs from a good cause, and the voice of the people, are with them ; with Manfred are terror and fear. Why do we then wait to rebel ? We have already delayed longer than is prudent. Do we wish Charles to reach the walls of Naples before we assist him ? Which then would be greater—the folly of the count in making us participators of the victory, or our imprudence in claiming it ; I cannot say. There is no reward without some danger, no guerdon without trouble ; although, calmly considering the matter, it seems to me that in making some demonstration in favor of the Count of Provence, we run no danger of any sort ; not yet have the armed troops of Calabria, of Apulia, or even those of Sicily, marched to meet them ; let us arise, let us break down delays, let not these forces be united ; fortune never offers but one opportunity, and you know, barons, that one to-day is worth more than two to-morrows, and that he who has one opportunity should not wait for another ; let this Colossus of clay fall beneath the curse of the Church, beneath the fury of the oppressed. Do we then wish to await the worst outrages, to lift from our necks the infamous yoke

of Manfred? Are not our suppressed baronial rights sufficient? Are not the forced taxes? Our despoiled homes? The contaminated houses of God?"

"Our seduced wives?" added a voice.

"Who speaks of wives? What do you mean by wives?" cried di Caserta, irritated to fury.

"I have said it to add one more wrong to those you have enumerated."

The count changed color; he fell back upon the seat from which he had arisen, to add more force and passion to his oration, and although he used every effort, was unable to proceed; he therefore commanded della Cerra, who was seated by his side, to rule the meeting.

The old man, who the evening before had spoken with so much wisdom, without waiting for a second invitation, rose to his feet, and regarding the bystanders with a certain look of superiority, thus began: "Since the fates decree that for a good end an infamous expedient must be adopted, I console myself with the thought that public virtue was always the daughter, rather than the mother, of liberty; and as from a fetid root spring fragrant lilies, so we may derive from treason holy provision for the happy state of the people, for the prosperity of all. Now then, as we do not hate *the man* himself, but the heavy yoke with which he oppresses us, my advice would be, that in the execution of our designs, no private hate, no particular animosity, should intervene, that our posterity may see that if we had recourse to base means, it was because necessity prevented us from using generous ones—and necessity is esteemed a great promoter of bad deeds; rather, thinking better of it, I trust it will redound to our praise, because we, striving to do well, took no heed of public opinion. Meanwhile let us urge my Lord of Provence to advance as rapidly as possible into the heart of the kingdom: and since we are determined not to obey the commands of the Swabian, let us not aid him with our forces; it would be better not to answer his summons, than to desert him on the field: the first would be culpable, certainly; but the second not only culpable, but cowardly. Nor by this do I mean to say that we

must be disarmed; no, let us rather collect our forces, and form an army which shall be a curb to the conqueror, and a guarantee for his promises.—When we invite a stranger into our house, we should receive him as a friend, but always be so prepared that his friendly deportment towards us be not merely voluntary, but compulsory; the power to injure others with impunity is a great incitement to injury; and complaint of wrongs, when complaint is useless, is an additional stimulus to contempt. Let us use the strength that God has given us; let Charles see that although we give ourselves to him, yet we need not do so; and if he does not assure us, that we can assure ourselves.—You laugh, Count della Cerra? Do I speak like a fool? I have thought much, and cannot see how we can better prevent what I spoke of the other evening. . . .”

“I laugh, baron—yes, and I laugh with good cause, since these precautions of yours are like those of a man who, while the inside of the house is burning, tries to extinguish the fire by sprinkling the outside; it is necessary to destroy a part to preserve the whole; it is better to lop off the useless branches of a vigorous tree, so that it may become more fruitful. What do you mean to do with your armed preservers of order? That is what causes my laughter; nor is it unreasonable, for when Charles shall have the treasury in his hands, and the power of sending to the scaffold whomsoever he pleases to call rebels, the means, in short, of bribery and punishment, do you not see that your army will be destroyed in an hour? You know that offering obstacles easy to overcome increases the boldness of him who overcomes them. Hear me now, and say if I counsel better than you. A long time ago, a vile crew of vassals, bought with ready money from servitude, made themselves rich by our taxes, and not to speak of their insolence in not wishing to recognize feudal privileges, think in the simplicity of their hearts to make themselves our equals, and dare even hope to join together with its ancient protectors in the government of the kingdom; it is necessary to draw some blood from this body, which every day threatens to grow

larger. It is better that they should be convinced that they may change lords, not lordships ; that they must serve us, that they must form a mass dead or alive, according to our commands. The means to obtain this, consists in disposing them in armed bands, and sending them in aid of *the man*. Stimulated, then, by the flattering hope of a liberty which they neither know nor will ever be allowed to know, let them march cheerfully to the encounter, to slay and to be slain ; do not doubt but that French discipline will prevail over them, but not without bloodshed, of course, and then we shall have obtained two notable advantages—that of being rid of so dangerous a people, and that of having weakened those who wish to rule us. The powerful aid of our fortresses shall remain entire to us, and with them the power of dispersing the new lords, in the same way as the ancient ones will be dispersed ; the end at which we aim is so glorious, that we need take no heed of the means we use to reach it ; a treason more or less must not stop us in our career, and it seems to me that a little bloodshed in revolutions is always necessary. What ! do you shudder ? How long since you have become weak women, to be frightened at such words ? Is there one among you who would dare to swear upon the Gospel that he has not caused some secret murder to be committed in the vaults of his castle ? In truth, I can swear to you that revolutions without bloodshed have no advantage. Let Charles and Manfred perish, and we will provide for ourselves. Perhaps some will fear civil war, contentions among the chiefs ; but leaving aside the pontiff, who is ever ready to take advantage of our discord, so that it will be necessary for us to be united in order to repulse his endeavors, civil war is always preferable to the dominion of a foreigner.

Count Anselmo had got thus far in his speech, which, if not by its depth, at least by its wickedness, was equal to some pages of our Machiavelli, when a confused trampling of horses was heard close by. One of the conspirators, rising quickly, went to the balcony of a neighboring room, and immediately returned, crying : “Some armed men are coming this way !”

All spoke confusedly : "We are betrayed !" "It is the patrol passing !"—"Mercy upon us, we are lost !"—"No !"—"Yes, hear the noise ; it is too large a squadron for the patrol."—"I said so," said the old conspirator, without rising from his seat, to his neighbor ; "conspiracies, when they go on for a long time, cannot be concealed, especially among us, who are of so loquacious a disposition !" The confusion increased ; there was violent rushing to and fro ; a few had drawn their swords, fastened the door on the inside, and without a word showed themselves ready to defend themselves to the last ; most of them invoked God, and wandered through the hall as if deprived of their reason, like the men who were struck with blindness by the angel of God before the house of Lot. To so much confusion was added a very loud knock at the street door, and a voice cried : "Open, by command of the king !" No one dared to move in answer to the call, nor would they have been able to do so, for the boldest guarded the door. Some with their eyes covered, some looking on the floor, meditated if there might not be some hiding-place ; they saw a door, and all crowding near, hastened to open it ; the first who were pushed out fell forward against the sides of the entry, and there, pressed together, could neither retreat nor go on, while those behind cursed their delay and pushed more violently than ever.

Rinaldo di Caserta, who had remained unheeding everything since the remark which had interrupted his speech, suddenly recovering himself, exclaimed : "Cowards ! In giving yourself to a conspiracy, you have not calculated all the contingencies ; so much the worse for you ; this is an affair of the dagger ; put death between you and your oppressors, and fear no one."

The Neapolitans have but little reputation for courage ; on the contrary, they have rather that of being cowards : nevertheless fame sometimes errs, and history relates valiant deeds done by them when excited by the example or words of others ; therefore, hearing di Caserta, they changed their minds and drew their swords, swearing to fight to the last drop of their blood. By a strange con-

tradiction of our nature, those who had appeared most eager for flight, now strove to put themselves in the most dangerous positions.

Meantime, Manfred's guard had three times in vain commanded them to open the door in the name of the king ; they then attempted to burst it open ; the design succeeded, and the king sprang up the stairs first, followed by the unknown knight. They went through many rooms without finding a trace of any living being, but at last they reached a bolted door ; they tried to open it with their hands alone ; not succeeding, they took a mace to break it in ; it yielded at last, but not without some labor and time, for it was very strongly barred. They entered the hall, there was no one there ; they saw many cloaks lying upon the table, and some torn pieces of cloth and two swords on the floor, a fire, and many lights burning—all traces of recent occupants, but those occupants had disappeared. Manfred, observing some papers, took them in his hand, and saw with wonder that they were letters from his enemies, the pontiff and Charles, to the rebels. The guard, meantime, not being satisfied at the escape of the traitors, did all sorts of strange things : it happened that opposite the door by which they had entered there was another—a small door studded with iron, of a very solid appearance, and thinking that some of the fugitives might have escaped by it, they, without stopping to think, crowded against it to push it open, as a short time before the conspirators had done, and it already had begun to shake under their united blows, when the captain showed how impossible it would have been for them to have gone out by that way, for the bolts were on that side. Now occurred a singular event : one of the guard devoted to the king, looking at the tapestry with which the hall was hung, had his attention attracted by one part that represented the pope seated in the consistory, in the act of receiving the *Chinea* (white palfrey), and the tribute that, some centuries since, had been levied upon the kingdom. Infuriated with blind passion, he raised his mace, and threw it with all his force against the arras : it was lucky for the pontiff then that he was of

tapestry, for the mace struck just above his ear and cleft his head ; but the weapon did not bound back, as it would have done if it had been thrown at the wall, but penetrated the arras and disappeared, and was heard to roll on for some distance. Imagine the terror of the guard : he was almost on the point of kneeling down and asking pardon of the cloth ; but that unknown knight, Rogiero, in fact, sprang forward, and tearing it entirely away, disclosed a very broad corridor. The discovery of this passage, joined to the observation of the captain, diverted the attention of the guard from bursting open the other door, and caused them to wait for orders from Manfred. He boldly took in his hand a light, and leaped into the corridor ; his soldiers followed him.

It is necessary to inform the reader that the hall where the conspirators had met had once been destined for criminal judgments, at the time that the pontifical vicar governed Benevento for the Church. The small door which the guard had attempted to burst open, led to the prisons ; the large corridor, hidden behind the arras, served for a room for trials. They saw ranged about in order, like *chef-d'œuvres* of art collected in some museum, the instruments of torture used in those times to make the accused confess.

Manfred, giving no heed to those instruments, went on with great haste ; he traversed an incredible number of rooms and galleries, the doors of which, in their flight, the traitors had left open. At last, when they least expected it, they came upon a deserted street near the walls ; they looked and listened intently. Silence everywhere ; they stood for some minutes in doubt whether to return or go on, but the best way seemed to retrace their steps. Reaching the hall of assembly, Manfred ordered his guard to take possession of the cloaks, swords, and everything left there by the conspirators ; the letters from his enemies he put carefully in his bosom. On returning to the royal palace, he perceived that the unknown knight, taking advantage of the confusion, had disappeared. This unexpected event caused him no greater wonder, but it increased his suspicions.

Meanwhile Rinaldo and Anselmo, out of breath and weary, for they had walked very rapidly, arrived at their own dwelling. In what way they had drawn themselves from so imminent a danger, we will explain in a few words. Count della Cerra, a very shrewd man, had not chosen the palace of the pontifical legate for the rendezvous of the conspirators without his accustomed penetration. Before leaving Naples, he had heard of the secret exits of the palace of Benevento; his first care, as soon as he arrived in the city, was to ascertain if what report said was true; and fortune was so favorable to him, that he found the plan among the archives. His malicious nature would not allow him to disclose the secret passage at the first noise: himself the most cowardly of men, he enjoyed the cowardice of his equals, and in this fellowship of baseness his heart was solaced; nor would he, if grave necessity had not forced him to it, have put an end to the exhibition of their shame; for it was the most pleasing spectacle which he had ever witnessed. Therefore, while he saw fear among the conspirators, he stopped to enjoy it, forgetful of danger; but when they conceived a sudden courage, when they agreed to defend each other or die, then, as if unable to support this glow of generosity, he imparted to them the means of saving themselves by flight. Whether or not they accepted it with joyful cries, let those judge who know that if man is sometimes induced to become courageous through despair, oftener he is made cowardly by security.

They had not quite recovered from their fatigue when one of the king's guard entered the room, who commanded them, on the part of his Serene Highness, to present themselves immediately at court.

"Do you know the reason of the summons?" demanded della Cerra with ill-concealed impatience.

"My orders are to summon you immediately to court," and with these words the soldier made a bow and departed.

"I will not go there," said Count Anselmo, "certainly not. If they wish to imprison me, let them take me; but to go and put myself into their power, I know no human

or divine laws that command it. Up, up, count, there is no time to think upon it: let us fly."

"Always to fly, always to fly, and never to kill!" replied di Caserta; "you may fly if you wish; I hate the advice of fear; I never passed an hour that prepared me to leave this life without my revenge; before dying, I hope to see the blood of my enemy; if the vengeance of the mind has failed, that of the hand cannot; are you not armed with a dagger? What do you fear? Death settles all accounts." And taking Anselmo by the arm, he added, "Come."

"See, my lord constable, see, my lord chamberlain," exclaimed Manfred, as he saw the Counts di Caserta and della Cerra enter the room, "the boasted fidelity of my barons; when I labor day and night to preserve them from the invasion of the foreigner, when I am ready to shed my blood on the field of battle for their safety, unwilling even that I should close with glory a life worn out with labor, they conspire to despatch me with the dagger of an assassin, and offer my throne to my enemy,—the traitors!"

"Your Highness," replied di Caserta, "are you really sure that you have not been deceived?"

"Deceived? See if I deceive myself; read these letters, see the signature of the Count of Provence, and gather from the reply what the villains must have offered him."

"I am horrified," cried with one voice Anselmo and Rinaldo.

"It is an indignity; they wish me to be cruel. They try to force me to tarnish my fame as a generous prince; they shall obtain what they wish; perhaps the rays of tomorrow's sun may shine upon a hundred headless bodies. Here, where I call them to consult upon the affairs of the kingdom, here they betray me—infamous men!"

"I have always encouraged your Serene Highness to severity," added della Cerra, "nor do I know why evil counsel should prevail; the good have no need of mercy;

to the bad, justice should show itself both inexorable and severe."

"What have I done to the barons, that they should screen themselves behind treason, in order to destroy their king? . . .?"

"The son of Frederick," began di Caserta.

"Glorious St. Germano!" exclaimed della Cerra, "how can they prefer an unknown man to so wise, so virtuous a king?"

"No, my faithful barons, I feel that I am guilty; but if Manfred has sinned, he has not sinned against them." He was then silent. After some time he murmured in a low voice: "Perhaps I am judged, perhaps this is the first hour of passion; let us do all that belongs to a magnanimous man to do in such a case, and then let us leave to God to fulfil what He has decreed. Barons, be seated."

When they were seated, he dictated to them, with wonderful celerity, despatches for the lieutenants, the governors and other magistrates who represented him in the different cities of the kingdom, ordering them to move as soon as possible with supplies; he laid out the roads for them to take, the stops to make, and indicated Capua and San Germano as the places to join forces. When the despatches were written, he signed and sealed them without reading; thus passed a great part of the night. This business done, he sent off della Cerra to procure some rapid couriers to carry them to their several destinations. He remained alone with di Caserta.

"You at least do not betray me, faithful friend!" said Manfred, clasping his hand; "our friendship is very old; it began under the auspices of that being who now blesses it from heaven. . . . Oh! how imprudent I am to renew your sorrow; time has not healed your wound? Time, then, has no power upon woes like yours! Go now, provide with Count Giordano for the safety of this city and my family; for the perfidy of a few rebels I must not neglect the safety of my faithful subjects, nor can I; it would be attributed to cowardice. If the star of Swabia must set, let it set with the same brilliancy with which it

rose. The fame of my ancestors shines brightly, nor will we dishonor it ; it is easy to make ourselves great when fortune favors us, difficult when she frowns upon us. Go ; provide for all ; you have wisdom enough to rule the kingdom ; do all that you wish, but let there be no bloodshed. We will put the traitors in a situation which will prevent them from injuring the good ; let them have for punishment the shame of plotting a dishonorable work uselessly ; I trust much to your vigilance and fidelity."

Di Caserta received these flatteries like a tamed lion, and set out to do his office.

The Count della Cerra, having despatched the couriers, returned to the palace ; he went on his way thinking : " Judge, O my head, if the favorable moment for discovery has come : has Gisfredo been beforehand with me ? Is Manfred deceiving us ? Indeed, Gisfredo has not shown himself to me for some time, and Manfred is capable of this and more. But Gisfredo could not have told him how or when—no, I have never intrusted it to him ; that was a lucky foresight : then my confession may be somewhat necessary, and rewarded. But who will assure me that Manfred will give me a reward ? If I had a guarantee for it—then—he would certainly despise me—what matter ? do I not despise myself ? That would be nothing if the reward were only sure—suppose I make him swear it upon the gospels : but he is a heretic ! Upon the honor of his family—it is the same thing. I am really sure, though, that he will reward the first accuser in order that others may not lose courage to reveal to him future conspiracies. Certainly it would not be great shrewdness to punish as well as recompense at this time, and Manfred is no fool : I should not like to be near him, nor would he like to have me ; he will send me as governor to some distant province of Sicily : so much the better for me, I will reign in my own fashion, and shall have the right of life and death ; oh what great joy it is to sign a death warrant ! See how hope blinds wisdom ! If Charles should come ? The least I could lose is my head if I stay ; if I fly, I should lead a miserable life in this wretched world,—misery is an atrocious crime ! Through-

out the earth tribunals may be found to punish it. I could not carry my fiefs and my government with me ; let us seal the compact with ready money : it will be better so ; I will go to Trapani, I will prepare a fast galley there, and if affairs are ruined for the Swabian, I will fly to the Saracens, and, if need be, will abjure my faith. 'The land of my birth—what birth? Wherever wines produce juices that renew the blood, wherever beauty yields her pleasures to *gilded wishes*, wherever may be found minds to corrupt, virtues to despise, vices to exercise—there is my country. And in conclusion, Rinaldo is beginning to be dangerous ; he has betrayed, and prudence counsels me to leave him.'—Thus meditating, he entered the ante-chamber of the king.

"Anselmo," said the Count di Caserta, meeting him, for destiny had willed that he should return before him, "I was waiting for you."

"Is anything amiss, Sir Rinaldo?"

"Nothing amiss. Manfred does not distrust us ; be not discouraged. Anselmo, let us show a bold front to fortune, for events are not desperate yet. Have you delivered the despatches?"

"I have."

"And sent forth the couriers?"

"Yes, count."

"Why have you done this?"

"And what should I have done?"

"You are not the man to need suggestions : you should have thrown them into the river."

"You are right, count ; but the turmoil of these events has somewhat confused my head. . . I know not, . . . I should not have thought . . ."

"Beware of what you do, Anselmo ; my heart, near ceasing to beat, has resumed its old strength ; it watches, and you would not be in time to betray me."

"Oh ! what are you saying, my noble protector?" resumed Cerra with an obsequious demeanor. "I have never thanked Heaven so much as now, that it grants me an occasion to show you my gratitude by placing my life

in jeopardy for you. I have sworn to myself to participate both in your joys and in your sorrows."

Rinaldo made believe to thank him with a smile ; still, knowing what a scoundrel he was, and danger making him more suspicious, he did not like that the option of being honest should depend on Cerra himself. Hence, he made him go with him into the presence of Manfred, nor did he leave him alone a moment, till the fell destiny which now threatened the count had closed his lips with the secret of death.

CHAPTER XX.

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

Cotal fine ebbe il maledetto Gano :
Chè lo eterno giudicio è sempre appresso,
Quando tu credi che sia ben lontano.

PULCI, *Morgante Maggiore*.

Thus did the accursed Gano pass away :
For ever near eternal justice is,
Although far off thou thinkest it will stay.

M. G. M.



UPON the head of Manfred rests the crown of kings—if it were a circle of fire, it would bind it less painfully. An excruciating pain tortures his temples, as if the blade of a poniard was piercing them through and through ; the fibres of his brain, as if burnt over, beat with incredible anguish, yet he lifts his head boldly as in the day of victory, and shows that pride will domineer over his brow until death shall have impressed upon it the stamp of destruction. His eyes, accustomed to watch with fear in the night, or sleep with horrible dreams, sparkle with such a lustre that he must be a daring one who could look up to them the second time. His face was pale, and a smile wavered

over it, but it was not a smile of joy. Surrounded by royal pomp, the purple mantle embroidered with gold and ornamented with jewels, covered part of his person ; he grasps the sceptre with his right hand, his left rests upon the silver eagle that he wears embroidered on his chest ;—if he does this to prevent its flight, he attempts it in vain. It is written in the book, where neither by threat nor by prayer destiny erases aught, that the Swabian eagle is to abandon forever the land of Naples.

On the right of the king sits Count Rinaldo di Caserta, of the family of Aquino, as great constable of the kingdom ; over his seat hangs the escutcheon bearing the armorial pretence of his house, which in those times was *quartered per cross* first and second, *gules*, three bars *sinister, or*, third and fourth, *argent*, three bars *sinister, gules*, and lion *rampant, argent*.

He wore a purple mantle lined with ermine, his head covered with a red silk cap, and held in his hands the royal sword, ensign of his office : forgetful of the people that stood around him, forgetful of himself, he fixed his eyes on the face of Manfred to espy its grief ; though, if he rejoiced or despaired at the constancy of the king, no one could tell, for he stood there immovable as a corpse. First on the left hand of the king appeared the chief justice of the kingdom, Giordano Lancia, cousin of Manfred : he also wore purple, and beside his shield, which bore *or*, lion *rampant, sable* ; a *bordure, gules et or*, which the Count Lancia had assumed as descendant of the Dukes of Bavaria, he displayed the *gonfalon* of justice, which according to old customs he hung up to the balcony of his palace every time a man was condemned to death. Immediately after the constable on the right came the seat of the high admiral, which was empty, because this office was held by Marino Capece, who at that time, with his brother Corrado, governed Sicily : there was, however, hanging over it the family arms, and a lantern, insignia of his office. Second on the left of the king came Anselmo della Cerra, grand chamberlain, also dressed in purple, with a golden key at his belt : he turned his eyes suspiciously right and left, and would take note of everybody ;

where there was only a line of knights either he did not look, or did it very slightly ; but he took great care in glancing through the crowd, where it was most compact, to discern the furthest ones, and those least visible in the dim light. There followed after him the officers of the crown in the following order, for it would take too long to describe them all : the great prothonotary, whose duty it was to receive the minutes, and reduce into decrees all that the king ordained ; he sat the third after the king, and was then, according to the histories of the time, a certain Messer Giovanni d'Alife : the lord chancellor, president of the civil affairs of the kingdom, and secretary of the king, sitting the third on the left of Count della Cerra, was Corrado di Pierleone Benincasa : finally the great butler, with the boar's head embroidered on his purple mantle, sitting upon the steps of the throne at the foot of the king, whom, if my memory errs not, was named Giordano d'Angalone, uncle to that Natale d'Angalone who distinguished himself so much in the conspiracy of the Sicilian Vespers. The several principal officers of the crown being disposed as we have stated, the rest of the hall of parliament was occupied by the lower nobility. It was noticeable though, that among such a large assemblage of people naturally very loquacious, there was not heard the least whispering : they seemed the ghosts of the dead conjured by a necromancer to appear upon that earth that had long before consumed their corpses.

While all the assembled barons stood in great suspense as to what was to follow, of a sudden a door opened, and there appeared two priests carrying an altar, the chronicle says, of wood ; but we find that such altars, allowed in the times of the persecution of the Church, were solemnly abolished after the Emperor Constantine, in the year of grace 517, by a council in France. Hence we are inclined to believe that Manfred, who wanted to do many things his own way, and different from the precepts of the Church, behaved in the same manner in respect to those altars. The priests arriving in the midst of the hall, put down the altar, and having lighted two candles, and placed on it a silver crucifix, and a missal with clasps

also of silver, without saying a word, retired whence they had come. Manfred stood a moment, then he slowly strove to rise from the throne ; it seemed at first as if he could not ; he attempted again, and in vain ; finally, by a violent effort he rose to his feet, descended the steps, and stopped before the altar ; he deposited upon it the sceptre, the crown, and the royal mantle ; then, raising his right hand towards the barons, he exclaimed : " We wish for no blood ; . . . we wish not your dishonor ; . . . cease to seek by treachery the means of dragging us from the throne : . . . you could not do it. By your free and universal consent we assumed this crown and sceptre at Monreale ; by our own free will we restore to you this sceptre and crown at Benevento ; may he whom you will call to succeed us accomplish what we had hoped to do ; may he with his virtues cause you to bless the moment in which, changing faith, you thought the fall of your ancient lord a great blessing ! " . . . And he was continuing with great emotion, but the barons, no longer respecting the king's speaking, drew their swords, and broke forth with loud cries : " Death to traitors ! . . . Where are the traitors ? " And those who cried most were those who were betraying him the most : Count Cerra cried himself hoarse ; Rinaldo di Caserta raised his sword, but coming to his senses from his distraction, and perceiving that it was a question to defend, not to kill, the king, lowered it again, sighing : " It is not yet time ! "

The noble Manfred, protesting against those cries, broke forth, saying : " We wish for no blood : be this the last command from our authority. "

Then the barons, knowing not what to cry, said : " Resume the crown we have given you, O king ; we will give our lives to maintain it on your head. "

" Nowadays, " replied Manfred, " the crown of Sicily is more a crown of thorns than one of glory ; still, we will not refuse the charge, provided you will participate in the dangers of supporting it, for we alone are not sufficient. It behoves therefore to renew the ancient oath ; this is the same crucifix that heard—it is now ten years

ago—your voices ; these the Gospels that felt the touch of your hands ; swear.”

All the barons of the kingdom replied tumultuously : “O king, we are ready to do all you order us.”

In the disorder that ensued, Anselmo found a chance of approaching Rinaldo, who, having returned to his abstractions, seemed like a somnambulist, and carefully whispered in his ear : “Count, wake up ; we have got to renew our oath of allegiance ; . . . it will be an additional sin.”

“It will not be the one that will send us to perdition,” replied Rinaldo ; then boldly approaching the altar, as was the custom, he kneeled down the first, and touching with his right hand the book of the Gospels, and with his left the hand of the king, he pronounced with a loud voice, which by-degrees became more faint, the following formula : “In the presence of God and the saints, I renew in the hands of my King, Manfred First, the oath of fealty and loyal homage that I already swore to him at Monreale.”—Saying which, either passion or conscience smote him ; he turned pale, and the parts of the face the least exposed to the circulation of the blood became quite dark ; nevertheless, so anxious was the great chief justice to pronounce his oath, that those emotions of Caserta passed unnoticed.

After him there comes forward Count Anselmo, boldly, smiling with that sardonic smile of his, as if mocking the person of the king, and the more sacred presence of the Man-God, the heaven and the earth ; he kneels before the altar, and stretches his hand upon the Evangelists. . . .

“God !” exclaimed the frightened wretch, for an iron hand had grasped his wrist like a vice, and held it suspended.

“Perjurer !” threateningly cries at his side a knight all covered with mail ; “were it not for the respect due to the sacred altar that you have polluted, and that of his Serene Highness King Manfred, I would thrust a dagger in the middle of your heart ; rise ; . . . before my king, before you, honorable barons, I accuse this man, Anselmo, Count della Cerra, guilty of high treason, and a traitor to the kingdom.”

“Thou liest in thy throat !” although taken aback by the event, replied immediately Anselmo della Cerra.

“I,” continued the knight, turning to Manfred, “in the presence of your Serene Highness, with your good and gracious leave, affirm that Anselmo, Count della Cerra, here present, is a traitor. He has attempted to deliver your kingdom into the hands of your enemies, much to your injury and disgrace, to the injury of the state, and bad example to all your vassals ; he has persevered in the infamous attempt with all his mind and strength ; and although I have infinite proofs to sustain with certainty my accusation, I confine myself to the production of this paper, that of itself is entirely sufficient.”

He handed cautiously a paper to the king, who had recognized the knight as the same one who had discovered the conspiracy the previous night : the paper was a minute of a letter that Count Anselmo intended to send to Charles d’Anjou, in which he magnified his services, and promised to render still greater ones ; only he should remember him. Towards the end he spoke of all the remaining barons his co-conspirators as a set of fools who, if it were not for him, would go of their own accord to put themselves into the hands of Manfred ; nevertheless, he need not doubt, for he was able to overrule the events, and resist fortune ; for he would willingly spend the work of his hand and brain for such a wise and generous lord ; he would spend even his life, if the occasion demanded ;—and so on, with expressions sometimes flattering, sometimes full of greediness, all vile. The paper, however, was not signed by the count, only it was written in his own handwriting : Rogiero had found it in the corridor, where Cerra had lost it in his hasty flight.

“Even,” continued Rogiero, “if my charge against him should not be considered as sufficiently proved, as a good and loyal vassal, I hold myself ready, oh my king, to defend your honor and life, nor eschew any danger in order to bring to your notice all conspiracies against your state, if I wish not to be judged also guilty of high treason. Therefore I offer to prove by personal combat that what I have asserted is true. I humbly and earnestly

beg that you would consider the charge sufficient to grant authorization for the duel, for I hope in the *Judgment of God* to prove it for the honor, welfare and exaltation of your state."

"And I," replied the accused, "Anselmo dellá Cerra, by permission of your Serene Highness, declare this unknown knight a liar, and protest that paper does not belong to me, that my handwriting in it is counterfeited. . . ." He had hardly pronounced the last words, than he perceived the blunder he had committed, and strove to remedy it by adding precipitously: "And hence I offer to . . ."

Manfred, who from the beginning of his speech had fixed on him his piercing eyes, at that fatal point interrupted him, asking:

"Who told you, Sir Count, that the handwriting of this paper is similar to yours?"

"I . . ." replied Anselmo, hesitatingly, "I saw it."

"Ah! you have seen it?" said Manfred, lowering his look.

"Yes," with increasing terror, added Anselmo.

Manfred again fixed his eyes upon him so as to force him to lower his to the ground, and after noticing his confused looks, with a voice half threatening, half mocking, said, "Very well."

Anselmo, obliged to finish his sentence of denial of the accusation, continued: "And hence I offer myself to prove the contrary by every trial, either military or civil, trusting only in the Judgment of God." *

Manfred in the meanwhile, after having carefully read the paper, handed it to the constable, saying: "What do you think of it?" Rinaldo, taking it in his hands, pretended to scrutinize it attentively: the bystanders, unable to restrain themselves, grouped around him; some took him by one arm, some by another; some thrust their heads under his chin, some over his shoulders; the tallest of them stood in front of him, on tiptoe, with his head bent on his breast, like a stork when it takes food; the

* For these formulas, see FAUSTUS, Treatise on the Duel according to the Laws of Honor.

shortest one lifting his face, and seeing so many men standing before him like so many walls, took a chair and mounted on it : thus there arose a confusion, a hubbub, such as the nature of the Neapolitans always adopts even in the commonest operations of life.

The conspirators, who feared every movement to be lost, with words and signs entreated Caserta to save them from that danger ; and he, who seemed to be all ablaze when the others seemed spent coals, assured them with a look that his spirit was on the watch. At this point the king, approaching him, repeated in a low tone, "What do you think of it ?"

"You can authorize the combat." Which was true, but he did not advise it for the sake of justice, but for the hope that if there was any means of safety for him and his fellow conspirators, it was by getting rid of the suspected Count Cerra ; which would certainly happen, if he was obliged to fight, being naturally a coward, and weakened in body ; while his adversary, to judge from appearances, seemed a very brave warrior : in fine, Caserta was playing on Cerra by accident the trick that Cerra had not been able to play on Caserta by shrewdness.

"We had thought, constable," said Manfred to Caserta, "to have this affair tried by civil judgment, for by these *Judgments of God* there has never resulted aught that is satisfactory ; for often the man challenged to it does not come to the field in person,* and with a manifest injustice very often guilt prevails over innocence."

"Yet our religion . . ." interrupted a knight.

"Religion is a holy thing ; but there is such a thing as superstition—as deformed an object as the former is lovely ; but the ignorant crowd, baron, as they are both mysterious, is not able to distinguish the one from the other."

"God," insisted the knight, "has often visibly protected innocence in His *Judgments*."

"But often also He has not. Why should we put

* The challenged in those *Judgments of God* were not obliged to fight in person, and often they were represented by a so-called *champion* who defended their cause.

Him to the necessity of performing a miracle, when we know not whether He has decreed it in His holy will : why appeal to Him when man can do of himself? Has He not given us our wisdom for this?"

The knight—either that he knew not what to reply, or for other reasons—drew back, murmuring: "He is a heretic."

Rinaldo, who for his private ends desired that the duel should take place, had allowed the knight to speak, because he was adopting a means of persuasion which it would not become him to use; and beside, his insisting would have given rise to suspicion: now, however, perceiving that those persuasions were not sufficient, he added his own.

"My king," said he to Manfred, "you know better than any one else that there are two causes for which, according to the constitution of the kingdom, a duel can be allowed in your states: first for charge of high treason, second for murder by poison or otherwise; so that your Serene Highness could not withdraw your consent, for..."

"And if we should, constable, what would you have to say? It is better now than never: should errors live forever? Shall there be no end, no limit, to the follies of our ancestors? Would you grieve that these remains of barbarous ages should be abolished?"

Giordano Lancia, cousin of Manfred, strongly attached to him both by love and interest, gave force to the advice given by Caserta, in saying: "My king, I take the liberty to observe that these *Judgments of God* constitute part of the baronial privileges; it seems to me that just now it is not the season for reforms, and they would complain of this more than any other, because, as it is an external demonstration of those privileges, it would humble them more in the eyes of the people."*

Manfred, who had not thought that there would be such strong opposition to his views, moved by the advice

* Nobles in those days were not amenable to civil trials whenever they were accused of treason or other crimes, but to the so-called *Judgment of God*; and in some cases they were also allowed to be represented by a *champion*.

of such authoritative persons, shrugged his shoulders, saying: "Truly error arrives as swiftly as desire, and departs as slowly as hope!"—Then advancing towards the chief prothonotary, he ordered, "Make out our letters-patent: we grant the free field."

The chief prothonotary, readily fulfilling his office, handed the parchment to Manfred to sign, who affixing his signature handed it back at once. Then Sir Giovanni d'Alife read: "We, Manfred First, by the grace of God, King of Sicily, etc., etc., by these presents grant to Sir Anselmo Count della Cerra accused, and to the unknown knight accuser, here present, free and safe field at *first blood* in this our city of Benevento, in which each of them may settle with arms the charge of high treason through the space of this day only, anything to the contrary notwithstanding, etc., etc. In witness whereof we have ordered these presents to be issued, signed with our hand and sealed with our seal, this 24th day of January, A.D. 1265.—MANFRED."

Anselmo did not expect this; noticing that the king was consulting with his chosen barons, among whom was Count Rinaldo, he felt sure that the *judgment of God* would go no further. Hence it is not to be told how unexpected was to him the king's concession of the trial by arms: he listened to it as one beside himself; yet the prothonotary had hardly finished reading the letters-patent than he thought within himself: Rinaldo must have certainly opposed its coming to this pass; at least he ought have done so; perhaps he had no means of preventing it, . . . but might he not have advised it?—why? I see no motive for it; this duel must not take place; nor shall it. Let us see if perchance the occasion has not arrived for placing myself under the protection of a throne, and him under that of the axe. . . . No,—it is now too late, events have dragged me on; in spite of my care to avoid the fatal union, their safety is essentially joined to mine, nor can I cause the axe to fall on the neck of my companions without losing my own head . . . my head!—here I must summon all my shrewdness: courage, Anselmo, fail not to yourself in this extreme danger; sharpen your

wits, face fortune boldly ; she is propitious to the bold, and there is nothing else left for your safety but audacity. In the same manner as it is told in the old legends of Gan of Mayence, mentioned in the epigraph of the present chapter, who, condemned by Charlemagne to be quartered for having betrayed the Christians at the battle of Roncesvalles, when Roland and the greater part of the paladins of France were killed, when approaching his place of execution, begged of the emperor only one favor, which, with the exception of his life, having been granted, he asked to be quartered by four green horses ; a ruse which did not avail that traitor more than his availed Count Anselmo, for, as the legend states, Malagigi, by art of necromancy, evoked four demons in the form of green horses, and Manfred by his authority removed all the obstacles set forth by the ill-starred della Cerra.

"My king," with a modest mien spoke Anselmo, turning to Manfred, "there is no dove, no matter how white, that cannot be contaminated by the malignity of others ; my loyalty to you can be demonstrated by thousands of proofs ; nor fear any offence from this man, who, to say the least, comes among us unknown, like the robber . . ."

"I might reveal myself, and then what would become of you, Anselmo?"

"I am speaking to my king, and beg not to be interrupted." (Manfred motioned the knight to be silent.) "Now God knows how willingly I would meet any man in the world, and even this man, to defend it with arms ; but belonging to an illustrious family, honored among the noblest in the kingdom, the laws of chivalry forbid me to measure my sword with one who not only shows no proof that he is a knight, but keeping himself concealed within his armor, may be attainted with infamous crimes . . ."

"I infamous? You are such . . ."

"Or banished for murder, high treason, or any other cause expressed in the constitution . . ." (The unknown was on the point of breaking forth ; but Manfred restrained him by a severe look ; yet he kept pressing, with a hand trembling with rage, the hilt of his sword.) "... so that I

can refuse him with good reason, in order that, with the assistance of God, in whom I trust, this being the cause of innocence, hence His cause, I may not win a victory against this man, more degrading than a defeat would be against an honorable knight."

"Count della Cerra," replied Manfred, "know that a man who labors, as this knight has done, to defend the glory of our house, cannot be infamous, nor stained with the crimes you have mentioned; nevertheless, since we, like you, desire that the laws of chivalry may be preserved inviolate, we will that you shall not fight, but with a knight." So saying, he ordered Rogiero to approach the altar: as he obeyed, "Kneel," he added, and taking the sword from his side, he unsheathed it, and struck it three times upon his helmet, and continued: "You are a knight: your actions have clearly showed that you have long known its duties; we doubt not that you will do honor to your new rank." (And so saying he fastened again his sword with his own hands.) "Nor shall we consent that you should present yourself in the field without armorial bearings. Constable Rinaldo, we beg of you to favor us, by lending him your armorial shield; we assure you that your *or* and *gules* bars, and lions-*argent*, will not grieve at this; for if it was allowed to a private knight to carry the arms of kings, we would have presented him with our own eagle."

Count Caserta, detaching the shield from his seat, handed it obsequiously to Manfred, who fitted it on the arm of the new knight. Rogiero, overcome by so much demonstration of love, could not articulate any other words but these: "O my king, thanks, thanks!"

"Now, Count della Cerra," said Manfred, "you see standing against you this man, whom by no exception can you now refuse, because, if even he had been contaminated by those stigmas of traitor or assassin that you have suggested, the order of chivalry now conferred by us has remitted them all, as the Holy Baptism does of sins."

"*The mouse had fallen into cruel paws,*" to use Dante's words. The more Count Cerra strives to get out of the meshes, the more he gets entangled in them, and on every

side the way of escape is barred. Nevertheless, he has not the heart to give up the attempt; imagining that the obstinacy of the knight in keeping himself incognito must involve some great mystery, and that, if he were discovered, it might lead to some chance by which the duel could be prevented, he has recourse to a new ruse. Turning to Manfred, he said, "If I mistake not, according to the laws of chivalry, the choice of the weapons belongs to me."

"It is so. Choose."

"Since I have the choice, the following are the weapons which I select: two sharp Genoese knives two palms long, a round shield, a woollen mantle, turban on the head, and a garland of flowers."

Many were astonished at the unexpected proposition of Cerra, considering it a bold one. Others, and among these Manfred, with a sounder judgment, considered it cowardly, recognizing in this a mere pretext to prevent the trial.

"We, as master of the field," spoke the king, somewhat provoked, "cannot admit these weapons, unusual in the customs of knighthood."

"I also cannot in any other way remove from me the shame of the suspicion . . ."

"We know not, Sir Count, if it is greater shame to give room for suspicion by one's conduct, than the apparent attempt to evade the trial that might vindicate that suspicion; the first is uncertain, the second is too certain . . ."

"Let not the choice of weapons deter your Serene Highness from granting the field," interrupted the unnamed knight, "for I can fight unknown, even in the manner proposed by my adversary."

"And how can you?" asked the king.

"By covering my face with a black silk veil, like that which hid the face of Count Anselmo, when he led me into a prison of Naples to let me know my father."

Rinaldo, who was listening attentively to the dispute, recognized the knight, and deeply meditating, wondered at the power of destiny that had forced him to hand with

a good-will his escutcheon to a man who, many years before, he had solemnly sworn, should never bear it.

Anselmo recognized him also, and he found no other expedient to hide his fierce trepidation, than crying, "Well, then, be it as your Serene Highness desires: I consent to fight with the usual weapons of chivalry."

"Constable," then said Manfred, "the grave cares of state prevent us from being present at this *judgment of God*; therefore we delegate to you our office of judge and master of the field, and expressly ordain that you be obeyed, as if you were ourself. Note that we have only granted the duel at *first blood*; take a sufficient escort to repress any movement in favor of either of the combatants, and if any one attempt it, let him be immediately put to death; sustain your own and our honor; take good care to preserve order; do not forget that very often these affairs of honor have ended in shameful assassinations. I appoint you, Giordano d'Angalone, second of the unknown knight; and you, Benincasa, of Count Anselmo; fulfil your office as valiant knights. Count Lancia, follow us. Constable, you will inform us in our palace of the results of the *judgment*." Saying these words, he dismissed with a salute the assembled barons, and disappeared with Count Lancia through a door of the hall.

"Rinaldo," whispered Count della Cerra, seizing the first opportunity of approaching him while they were going toward the lists beyond the walls of Benevento, "Rinaldo, you have seen with how much constancy I have saved your life; now it stands to reason that you should do something to save mine."

"I was just thinking of this; be of good cheer, Anselmo."

"Tell me how, Rinaldo, for it is in my hands to ruin you all . . ."

"And yourself with us, though . . ."

"There is no denying this: but what does the proverb say, count?—sorrow divided is half pleasure; and besides, who knows the end? One consequence may bring another . . ."

"You say wisely, Anselmo. Listen : you must not be frightened at nothing ; be firm, ward off the first blows, which you can easily, being covered all over with mail armor ; then I will raise a tumult in the camp, will have your adversary killed, who, if I mistake not, must be . . ."

"The son of your wife . . . certainly."

"Just so :—and you will escape . . ."

"Who assures me that you will do this ?"

"Who can assure you, Anselmo ? I am not responsible for these times, in which faithless men can no longer trust to each other."

And they would have continued speaking, only that at this moment they had reached the field. Rinaldo, calling the captain-at-arms, secretly ordered him to place his soldiers in a hollow square, and allow neither of the combatants to go out, till one or the other was either killed or defeated ; and if either dared, to kill him on the spot. Then taking aside the old conspirator, whose name the old chronicle omits, he said to him, that, should the unknown knight, as seemed probable, kill or wound Count Anselmo, he with the boldest of his companions should break through the files of the soldiers, who would make no opposition, and endeavor by all means to kill him also. The knight, hearing the order, shook his head, saying : "Very well ; I like the idea,—it is all right ; doubt not it shall be done."

In the meanwhile the seconds, having dismounted, began to examine their principals, as was customary, to see whether they were fully armed, and whether their armor was properly buckled, and no part of it weak or broken. Then the second of Anselmo went to the unknown knight, and verified with his own hands whether, under the silk cords that fastened the neck-piece to the helmet, there was any brass, iron or any other metal ; the same did Count Angalone with Anselmo, and found that everything was without fraud. This done, the combatants exchanged swords, for the usage was that each should fight with the sword of the other ; these also were first tried by the seconds to exclude any suspicion that they might be fraudulently manufactured with base metal ; they did not

measure their length, because as that of Anselmo was shorter than that of Rogiero, it compensated for the advantage of stature that this latter had over the former.

The seconds then placed the ends of a little cord, perhaps four yards long, in the hands of the combatants, and, remounting, visited the whole field to see whether there were any cavities or mounds which might prevent the knights from stepping backwards : after which they returned to their principals, and made a sign to the constable that all was ready.

The constable sent forward a herald, who, with the sword of justice, cut the cord, and the knights began the assault.

Shall we relate the incidents of this duel? Shall we narrate what is so often described in Italian or foreign poems? We will not do it; first, because any one who would desire such things would find a wonderful description of them in the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso, and another equally wonderful in the *Lombards at the First Crusade* of Tommaso Grossi, (a new glory of Italy, second to none, and if he desired it, easily the first;) second, because the events of ours were very common-place. Rogiero was far superior, both in strength and agility, to Count Anselmo; yet this latter kept on the defensive, trusting in the assistance promised. But he could not sustain it long: a little time having already passed, and, noticing that no one moved to his rescue according to the agreement, he supposed that Rinaldo, having fallen into his habitual abstraction, had forgotten it: hence he turned his face towards where he was, to rouse him, or to induce some of the conspirators to remind him of it. Useless attempt: not one of all those that had gathered there made even the slightest motion of raising a hand. Rogiero noticed the opportunity for him to advance a step, strike a goodly blow, and end the business. Nevertheless, as it usually happens, feeling stronger than his adversary, he wanted him to experience, before death, the more terrible pangs of fear. Thus the duel continued: Rogiero was unhurt; Anselmo, partly disarmed, had his hauberk broken in two or three places, his neck-plate bent, but there was no blood shed yet: indeed he groaned with

pain on account of the heavy blows, which, added to surprise at not being rescued, and fear of the aid arriving too late, caused him to falter, and to lose ground. At every step he turned his head desperately towards Caserta, who stood there immovable, and as many times offered the chance to his adversary to despatch him at once : in truth, Rogiero at last tired of that game, watched his chance, struck a powerful left-hand blow, hit Anselmo in the silk cords that fastened the neck-plate to the helmet, and knocking those pieces of armor to the ground, wounded him in the throat. Anselmo dropped senseless to the ground. Whether terror or pain took away his senses, we know not ; certainly they were both terrible ; his face turned yellow as gold, his forehead livid, his lips convulsed ; from the open wound the blood spurted out impetuously, red and thick, sure sign that the artery was cut—an incurable wound. The spectators raised a cry, and breaking through the files of soldiers, rushed at great speed towards the fallen one. Rogiero, turning around, noticed that the conspiring barons, more than all others, strove to get near him, and suspected treachery ; approaching his second, he said : “ Now save me, valiant knight, or I am a dead man.”

“ And what makes you doubt our faith ? ” asked Giordano d’Angalone, blushing.

“ Faith is already broken : why did they force the files ? I tell you they will murder me, and you will be responsible for my life in the face of men and Heaven.”

“ May God forbid such infamy ! Mount behind me, for my *Sorrel* has saved me from greater dangers than the present.”

Rogiero, without a moment’s hesitation, with a wonderful leap, armed as he was, mounted astride on the back of the horse ; Giordano d’Angalone, with voice and spurs, lanced him at a full gallop where he saw the least crowd. At that sudden tramping, at that furious pace, no man showed lameness : they all scampered right and left, leaving the space free, through which the generous steed soon carried off the riders out of all danger.

When they arrived near the gate of Benevento, Rogiero,

who had not been able to speak thus far on account of the rapidity of the horse, dismounted, and offering his hand to Count Giordano, said to him : "Count, I know too well that generous actions need no reward, for they are sufficient reward unto themselves ; nevertheless know that I owe you my life, and that it will be a happy day for me when I can . . ."

"What do you mean?" interrupted Giordano ; "don't you wish that I should conduct you to the king?"

"Time is pressing, count, and I have much to do ; I cannot . . ."

"Save your honor, what sort of loyalty is yours to King Manfred? You know the traitors, and yet you do not reveal them to him? . . ."

"I cannot. I have revealed to him all that was permitted to me : my silence proceeds from such a series of events, that I, I myself, who experience all the weight of their atrocious reality, hardly believe them credible. This only I beg you to assure him, that I have to-day killed the very worst of his traitors ; yet many others remain. Tell him to distrust, and be on the watch against some of those he trusts the most, for he is threatened with absolute ruin. . ."

"The safety of my king then requires that I should not let you go . . ."

"No, count ; you would do me harm, and would not benefit your king ; let me go ; for every step, every thought of mine, will be for the preservation of the house of Manfred."

"We should lose a valiant companion, the king a loyal knight . . ."

"Neither he nor you will lose me ; I am going to procure for him four hundred men-at-arms, and a famous leader."

"And where will you conduct them?"

"Tell him, to San Germano ; there we will meet, count ; perhaps you will know me then, and perhaps, danger being then passed, it will be a delight and pleasure for me to relate to you my past labors and the dangers incurred. Farewell, count ; my homage to Manfred."

So saying, he moved off with hasty steps. Count Gior-

dano went sorrowfully to report these events to Manfred. . . .

Count Rinaldo having ordered Anselmo's wound to be bandaged, had him placed on a litter and carried by another road to his palace. On the way to it he ordered the captain-at-arms that, after the litter was within, he should allow no one ingress into the palace ; which was accordingly done. The old conspirator, seeing that he could not enter, nor having been able until now to speak with Rinaldo, pushed through the crowd, until finally he approached him, and pulling him by the sleeve, obliged him to turn around.

"What do you want?" asked the count, sternly.

"Count, remember that according to all rules he ought not to live . . ."

"That is my affair ; would that you had fulfilled your duty with the other, as you ought !"

The old man was about replying, but Rinaldo turned his back upon him, and followed the litter that had already entered the palace.

Rinaldo alone, near the bed where lies the wounded Anselmo, counts every minute of his life, and, noticing that he is gradually passing away, he hesitates to hasten its consummation. Suddenly, however, whilst the dying man draws in a long breath, which Rinaldo thinks his last, uttering a deep groan, he awakes.

"Anselmo, my friend, how do you feel?"

Anselmo, opening his eyes, recognizes Caserta, and murmurs to himself : "Now I am truly lost."

"I am Rinaldo. Why do you call yourself lost, Anselmo?"

"Satan is at the head of the bed, . . . waits for my soul ; . . . he is right : . . . it is his property. . . . I saw well that you were Caserta . . ."

"O my friend, God knows that I feel strongly for your suffering . . ."

"I know it, my friend, I know it."

"I lose the most faithful . . ."

"What do you say? am I to die? am I so near death . . .?"

"You are."

"Oh! then, in charity, send for a confessor; let him come immediately."

"A confessor! And what are you going to do with a confessor?"

"Who lives badly, ends badly; . . . I know it: . . . yet a hope in God . . ."

"Nonsense!"

"No, . . . I tell you no; . . . the precepts of religion, which I learned when a child, awake in my mind, and bid me not despair. Oh! how beautiful Faith appears to us in the hour of death! the little good I have done flatters me that I may be pardoned, and ascend to heaven . . ."

"You are losing your wits, Anselmo; I see that you are getting childish: what are you talking about paradise? Where is your strong mind, your unbelief in the Creator? . . ."

"I have said it—Satan is at the head of the bed. You come to hasten me to perdition; . . . go away, I command you, I beg you; . . . in the name of God, go away; . . . no, come near, for I may even persuade you; . . . Rinaldo, have pity on me; death is a great mystery! would that I were able to tell you the thousandth part of what I feel, of what I see . . . raise your eyes, do you not see the glory of heaven?"

"I see nothing but the roof."

"Yet there is a light brighter than the sun, a sad melody; there is Christ . . . Christ with the thunderbolts that flash in His terrible hands. . . . A confessor, Rinaldo, a confessor . . ."

"What are you going to do with a confessor at this hour? Come, have courage; what do you think death is? It is a bitter drink! shut your eyes, swallow it without being frightened; once down the throat, it is all over."

"Oh! I want to confess my sins."

"But reflect, you cannot confess your sins without implicating your companions and myself . . ."

"And do you wish that I should lose my soul to save your body?"

"And do you expect that I should lose my head for the sake of your soul?"

"Oh! this is torture! This is barbarity! I will scream so loud that somebody will hear me. . . ."

"You shall not scream," thought Caserta to himself; and that was his death sentence: rising, he placed his hand under his doublet, and approached the dying man: "Come now, calm yourself, my friend," he said to him; "since this is your desire I will content you."

"Yes? many thanks. . . . May God reward you this very moment . . . go quick."

"I will go; only I beg you not to reveal the names. . . ."

"I promise it to you."

"Be of good cheer."

"I will, . . . but go."

"I am going.—And . . . what do you feel here?" asked Caserta, touching with his left hand the wound.

"Pain!"

"And here?" running his fingers down and pressing the left rib . . .

"Pain!"

"And here?"

"D . . . eath!"

Count Rinaldo, swiftly thrusting his right hand where the left was, had plunged a poniard into the heart of the wretched Anselmo, and immediately stepped back not to be stained by the blood, and stood with stupid curiosity contemplating the last struggles of his victim.

When these ceased, he withdrew the poniard, and murmured, "Poor Anselmo! How have you ended! Indeed, your long services, our ancient friendship, did not deserve this; no, indeed they did not! nor was I angry with you, nor hated you; but I found you in my way, and I destroyed you. Unwary man! did you not know that my breath poisons, my look burns, my touch destroys? why did you thrust yourself in my path? I have killed you; . . . one of us had to die; you have lost the game,—it is your fault; if I had lost it, it would have been my fault: you said so much that your doctrines finally penetrated my heart; according to your theories, I ought to have abandoned you

long since, for it is now a long time since you have been perfectly useless to me: yet I have waited till you became dangerous to me, . . . therefore you cannot complain; . . . it is your own work . . . perhaps I have learned more than you wished; but let the glory of having made an excellent disciple comfort you: I am perfectly convinced that when your soul shall be freed from this sudden terror, it cannot condemn me,—perhaps it will be the first to praise me; now you have ceased to labor, you owe me for your rest and quietude; you have gone where ‘the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest; there the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor; the small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master’ . . .”

All of a sudden, with a terrible crash, the glass of a window in that room violently struck, fell in fragments on the pavement, and an arrow, flying swiftly over the head of Caserta, stuck fast in the wooden roof.

“Vengeance of God!” broke forth Count Rinaldo with a wild cry, and crossing his arms over his chest he stood convulsively agitated, lowering his looks to the ground. He stood thus a little while, then, his fear diminishing, he opened his eyes, raised them hesitatingly, and saw the arrow, which had a paper fastened to its shaft; he mounted upon a stool, stretched his hand and took it; the writing said: “Count Caserta, consider that Eternal Justice punishes crimes and you have the example under your eyes; desist from your conspiracy and let it be a punishment to you to know that you have done wrong till now; otherwise a word from me can cause you to die the death of traitors.”

“They threaten!” murmured Rinaldo, and grasping again his poniard, he stared around with a savage look; “but I see no one;” and he added, looking at the corpse, “nor is there anything more for me to do here.”

Then he covered the dead with the bedclothes, and left the room with the steps of sin. Reaching the head of the stairs, he met the king, who with several court officers had come to visit the wounded man, when he, hastily approaching him, said: “My king, you have come in vain.”

"Why so, Count Rinaldo? How is the sufferer?"

"He is dead."

"Dead! Was the wound so mortal that it did not spare him an hour?"

"O my good master, it was frightful, and cut nearly one-half of his neck; the last words he said were, that I should ask your forgiveness for him. . ."

"Then he was betraying me?"

"It seems so."

"Lucky for him that he died; thus he has spared me the pain of sending him to the gallows. . ."

"Save your honor, Serene Highness," interrupted the courtier who had advised the religious duel, "you should have said to decapitate him, because, according to the constitution of the kingdom, such is the privilege of the nobles."

Manfred smiled, and Caserta thought: "I have spared you the pain of executing Anselmo, but I have deprived you of the pleasure of killing me and my companions,—your joy is very pleasing to me."

The king, seeing that his visit was of no avail, returned to his palace, where among other things he ordered Caserta to have the body of Count della Cerra buried privately.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FLIGHT.

Tu vedrai che lo indugio e la dimora
 Che si frappone alla vendetta accresce
 Questa gran piaga ch'è, da sè mortale.

ARRENOPIA, *Tragedia Antica.*

For thou wilt see that vengeance, long delayed,
 Increases that great wound—mortal before.

M. G. M.



WE cannot assure our amiable reader, who has so kindly followed us to this point of our history, if the chronicle from which we have derived the preceding narrative is or is not complete, since, as the pages are not numbered, we are unable to ascertain whether any are wanting; the truth is, that, omitting to state when and how Charles left Rome, by what road, and whether he met any obstacles in his way, without any further explanation, it runs on to the events which happened after the famous passage of the Garigliano executed by the French army; so that, in order to add a supplement to this space, we will endeavor to narrate, as best we can, what happened in the interval. After having been crowned at Rome on the day of Epiphany, the Count of Provence, without any delay, set forward, both in order to avail himself of that first enthusiasm of his troops, and also because, if he delayed, he would have had no money to pay them; and Pope Clement, for many reasons, principal among which was that he himself did not have any, could not lend any to him. The histories of the times do not tell us whether Charles did what all the other captains both before and after him have done when marching to the conquest of the kingdom of Naples, namely, divide their armies in two, sending one along the sea-shore, and the other along the foot of the Apennines, with the intention of uniting at Capua and

then marching together on Naples. Rather it seems that he acted differently ; and unwilling to separate his troops, he approached with his entire strength by way of Frosinone to the pass of Cepperano : perhaps he feared to meet too strong a resistance at Fondi and Itri, which fortified places he would have to pass if he came along the coast, and thought that, even if he succeeded in getting over these two passes, there would have remained a third one, and the most difficult of all—that of the Volturno, near Capua ; which, as the river was very deep, and the bridge defended by both ancient and new towers, seemed impregnable. Passing through the Roman Campania, the people not only did not oppose him, but gave him all aid and assistance as to the most beloved son and champion of Holy Church. The Archbishop of Cosenza, Bartolommeus Pignatelli, accompanied him as apostolic legate, blessing any one who joined him in the enterprise against Manfred, and ready to excommunicate any one who would dare to take his part. So great was the authority of his preaching, that many people of the country came from every part, willing to be killed in favor, as they said of religion against a heretic. The people of Mount San Giovanni, that in 1494 fought so nobly against the army of France with so much peril to Charles VIII., received with infinite joy the fatal Anjou, and aided him with spontaneous subsidies. Even the weather (for when fortune takes her favorites in hand, she never does things by halves), that, as it was the month of February, ought to have been rainy, was as clear as June ; the sun, unusually warm, seemed glad to illuminate with resplendent light the steps of the man of destiny. So that the army of Charles, like people anxious not to be too late at a feast, on the fourth of the month arrived on the banks of the Garigliano. This principal river of all the kingdom of Naples, that has its source at a little distance from the Lake Celano, passing through Sora, Cepperano, and Pontecorvo, falls finally into the Tyrrhenean Sea, forming a natural boundary between the Roman Campania and Terra di Lavoro. They say that its waters run for eighty-five miles, and they affirm that it can be navigated for twenty-five above the sea ; yet at Cepperano and at Castelluccio is

not so deep but that it can be forded. Manfred, who well knew the importance of the place, sent there, immediately after the meeting at Benevento, the Constable Rinaldo, Count of Caserta, to whom he added Giordano Lancia, with many companies of Apulian troops, so as to defend the pass : he ordered them not to come to any engagement ; if assailed, to strive to plunge the enemy into the river. The Swabian knew that delay would have been more useful to him than victory itself, and the enterprise of Charles would result in a flight, if he could not engage soon in a battle ; for he lacked money, the first and perhaps the only sinews of war. He did not omit the slightest prevision required of an expert military commander : the place easily defensible, the sufficient troops, all affectionate to him, famous for discipline and valor, the loyalty of the Counts of Caserta and Lancia, to whom he had committed the command, encouraged him to hope well. At this point the chronicle resumes the narrative, and relates that on the evening of the fifth of February, while Manfred was returning to Benevento, from which city he had gone out to meet a troop of soldiers that were to be sent to him from Apulia, he was complaining of the negligence of the governors in forwarding them, and of the slowness of the leaders in bringing them up, showing himself more than usually sad ; when, raising his eyes to the horizon, he saw a big black cloud, that overshadowing the setting sun, obscured it to the sight. What was the relation which passed in that moment between that scene and the thoughts of Manfred, we know not ; but he stood contemplating it with a mysterious calm, and immersed in profound meditation, much more than man would use in like cases. The outward rim of the cloud, however, shone with the color of blood, and from it darted several rays, that, spreading widely through the hemisphere, tinged with red every object that the eye could discern ; from time to time a puff of wind shook violently the leaves of the trees, and flew over the ground, carrying before it a whirlwind of dust and straws ; the birds flew lower and lower, as if foretelling the clouding up of the heavens, and announcing with their voices the approaching storm. Giordano d'Angalone, who was riding

near the king, thinking that he divined Manfred's thoughts, said: "This evening the sun dies before his time."

Manfred, eying him with knitted brow, replied: "It dies, but brilliantly." And turning his eyes, which he did, to glance through the valley, he exclaimed: "Oh! why does that courier hurry so? truly he must bring some bad news."

The knights that accompanied Manfred directed their eyes to the point where he was looking, strained their sight as much as possible, but, unable to discern anything, said together:

"Save your grace, you must be mistaken . . ."

"Mistaken! Look there,—there on the left, near the devil's rock," and he pointed with his finger, "in the direction of the chapel of our Lady of Tears, do you not see a man striving to gain the summit of the hill?"

They tried again more eagerly than before, but after repeated efforts they replied: "We see nothing at all."

Nevertheless, at the order of Manfred, they all stopped on that hill; nor had they to wait long before they saw a dark spot, that seemed to detach itself from the extreme horizon, and by degrees enlarge as it approached. They all wondered much at the circumstance, and all agreed to attribute it to a miracle; and truly, says the chronicle, it was not without the will of God, Who, purifying his intellectual and bodily faculties, foretold to his wearied soul the sorrow of the approaching misfortune; which we will not affirm, although among many nations of the earth there existed, and perhaps still exists, the belief that the predestined have the gift of prophecy, and that by certain signs in the eyes one could tell the man, who, before closing them forever, has received, as if in recompense of his premature death, the power of foreseeing the events that are to happen. Now they clearly distinguish the courier: he had his mouth covered by a scarf, in order that, in the fast running, the air might not be prevented from entering freely into his lungs; he held his spurs more than half transfixed in the horse's sides, for either distracted by other thoughts he did not notice that continuing thus he would kill the animal, or else, calculating that, on account of the

fatigue incurred, he could not endure much longer, he desired that these last moments of life might be consumed in a desperate effort to reach his destination ;—brutal, but not unusual cruelty among us, who call ourselves images of the Creator ! The poor beast breathed in a most fearful manner, his mouth was stained with bloody foam, his sides dripping with blood, his body all in a sweat ; yet he flies with such fearful pace, that he could hardly be followed by the eyes in the rapid strides which he takes from the last cloud of dust to the new one which he raised with his tramping. Arriving to within forty paces of Manfred, he stumbled down with a long stride, and dropping his head lay immovable : the courier, pulling the bridle, spurring harder than before, attempted to raise him up ;—it was labor lost. “ You might have waited another forty steps to die ! ” murmured the courier, dismounting, and, without even deigning him a look, advanced on foot toward the king ; he kneeled panting at his stirrup, but overcome by fatigue fell headlong on the ground. Manfred dismounted, raised him tenderly, seated him, and with his own hand unloosened his belt, that he might breathe more easily. Revived after a short rest, the courier began sorrowfully : “ O King Manfred, I bring you bad news.”

“ It is now long since we have expected good ones.”

And thus saying, Manfred put his elbow on the saddle of his horse, and let his head fall on the palm of the hand.

“ I am about to relate a great misfortune, my king.”

“ And we are prepared to listen to it : relate it.”

“ The Provençals have crossed the Garigliano . . . ”

“ What !—Thou liest ! ”

“ So would it please the Holy Virgin and San Germano that you had justly given me the lie, as I would not call you to answer for it.”

“ Why have they fought ? Had they not orders to avoid a battle ? Behold, he who uses arms without wisdom, lays them down with loss ; . . . those men are responsible for the bloodshed . . . ”

“ O my sovereign, what do you say about blood ? an eternal disgrace has contaminated the honor of the barons of the kingdom.”

"How!"

"Charles crossed the river without striking a blow."

"God! . . ." broke forth Manfred with a loud cry, grinding his teeth and raising his head, and let fall such a hard blow with his fist on the back of the horse, that this latter started to run; but he thrust his right hand in his mane, and with a convulsive strength forced him to stop; then interrogated the courier: "Where is Caserta? Where is Lancia? Is this the faith of relatives? Have they survived to such a shame? If they have, . . . I leave them life for a punishment."

"Alas, my king! it was Caserta who betrayed you."

"Who? Caserta? Have you named Caserta? Why has he betrayed me? What had I done to him? Did I not honor him? Did I not call him to share my government? Did I not appoint him, after me, the first officer of the kingdom? Did I not give him the preference over my own relatives? Rinaldo! my friend! Why? Ah! what a flash of old remembrance! Lady Spina! Time has reduced even her very bones to ashes, but has not erased the offence? He who offends forgets; but the offended binds his memory with an iron chain, and places on his soul the weight of revenge: is not revenge the gangrene of the heart? I have erred; miserable is the king that offends; more miserable he that offends and does not kill! Rinaldo has done his part, because we failed in ours: he who wears a crown should never err; we are paying a very bitter penalty for it, but yet a due atonement. Ought we? . . . A Manfred? . . . No, we ought not have done it; but *whom God wishes to destroy He first renders mad.*" *

These last words escaped brokenly from the lips of the king, for passion had palsied his tongue; his eyes sunk under his eyebrows, a livid hue colored his forehead, his muscles swelled, all his countenance was so distorted that the bystanders shuddered with terror; he covered his face with both his hands, and after meditating a while, removed

* An expression often used by the chronicler Villani in the narrative of these events, Book VII.

them, showing himself calm.—Calm ! he evoked a sensation similar to that of him who, sitting on the border of the sea, enjoys watching the calm waves slightly rippled by the evening breeze, when of a sudden his delighted eyes, glancing farther, perceives pieces of shipwrecks and floating corpses—signs of the last storm.

The courier, who had had no courage to open his lips, after receiving express orders, continued thus : “ On the evening of the 4th of February, our scouts, returning in haste, gave us warning to be on the alert, for the enemy’s vanguard was already in sight : indeed, there was no need of advice, for Count Lancia was watching incessantly, and encouraging the soldiers by words and deeds to worthy actions. Presently there appeared a division of the troops of Charles, then another, and another still, but night supervening, we could discern no more ; but to all appearance they had no intention of giving battle. It was already past the first hour of the night, and I was on duty by the tent of my commander, Count Giordano, when an armed man approached it ; I bent my bow and asked : ‘ Who goes there ? ’—‘ Swabia,’ replied the knight ; ‘ go and awake Count Giordano, for I must speak to him.’—‘ There is no need of waking me,’ replied my commander, putting his head out of the tent, ‘ for he must be a poor vassal that sleeps while his lord is in danger ; speak, constable, for I am at your orders.’—And he came out ; standing in the open air, for the sky was clear, and there blew not a breath of wind, Caserta began : ‘ Dear Giordano, if you, as I doubt not, love the king as I do, I have been thinking that you would not oppose a stratagem of mine, by which I am sure to destroy the army of the Provençal.’—Lancia replied that he would willingly assist him ; nothing he held more at heart than the service of his king : ‘ expound your plan, for on my part I would do my utmost to execute it with alacrity.’—‘ Very well, my dear Giordano,’ added Rinaldo, ‘ you know that this river Garigliano is not only fordable here, but the higher one goes towards its source the easier it is to ford, especially at Castelluccio ; we, according to the rules of art and the orders of the king, have spread

our forces upon the right bank of the river, to repulse the enemy wherever he attempts to cross over ; but do you think this a wise plan when we could do better ? Certainly you don't think so ; the Provençal has not certainly agreed to manœuvre his troops to suit us ; rather I am inclined to believe that he will mass them all upon one point, and there forcing ours, which would be insufficient to resist, will ford the Garigliano, and will assail us in the rear and flank, much to our disadvantage : I think then, in order to obviate this danger, that we should withdraw somewhat back . . . '—'What?' interrupted Count Giordano, 'transgress entirely the orders of Manfred !'—'The king,' added Caserta, 'ordered so because he thought it the best ; but we are held by our oath of fealty to undertake not what seems, but what is really the best ; if he should reproach us for it, we should reply : We have conquered ;—doubt not, this is one of those valid excuses, that admit of no reply to the contrary. I was saying then that we should retire somewhat, and divide our forces among the woods along the road, I above the bridge with my Apulians, you below it with your Germans ; Charles, to-morrow, seeing the bridge undefended, will not send his troops elsewhere, nor display his front more than needed ; he will push forward by this pass, believing, pretentious as he is, that we hadn't the courage to stand, and fled at his sight ; we will wait his advancing in mass ; I then issuing from the wood will charge him on the left, breaking his column ; the moment you see the French disordered you will attack them on the right, and destroy the bridge ; those that will be cut off between us and the river, we will hurl into it ; those that remain between us and the interior, will have to surrender, having San Germano in their front ; the fact that the troops entrusted to your valor are few, is no hindrance to the plan, for your few Germans are worth my many Apulians, and as you have to assail them near the bridge, you cannot meet but a depth of six or eight files of soldiers ; whilst I must fight them assuredly in a larger number. What do you think of it, Giordano ? is it not a good stratagem ?'—Count Lancia thought a long while, then re-

plied, briefly : 'I cannot agree with you, constable ; your stratagem, to say the least, seems to me a very risky one, nor of much avail to us now ; one can conquer by fighting and also by avoiding a battle, and now this last seems to be the case ; if Charles weakens part of his front to make a vigorous impression elsewhere, we will press him with similar manœuvre on his weak point, surround him in his rear, thus obtaining with more ease and greater fortune the same desired effect, without deviating from the orders received.'—The discussion waxed warm for some time, but being unable to agree, Count Giordano finally proposed, to assemble a council of war, and let it decide : at this point the constable in a severe tone said : 'Lieutenant, we have until now spoken to you so as to have you a companion in this fair enterprise ; since you will not be our companion, we order you to execute what we deem it best to command.'—'You might have done so in the beginning, constable, if you had expected, in revealing to me your design, to find in me a subservient rather than a free-spoken soldier ; nevertheless I protest that I will do all I can to win, but that in spite of victory I will disapprove of your conduct before Manfred.'—'You will do what you please, but in the meanwhile obey ;'—and he went away. Count Giordano raised his hand to heaven, and I heard him say : 'God grant this stratagem may end successfully, but I fear me it will miscarry !'—We separated silently, leaving many fires lighted to deceive the enemy : the constable with his Apulians went east ; we few, with our commander, hid near the bridge. The dawn appeared that was to shine upon the disgrace of the kingdom, when the Provençals, seeing the head of the bridge without defence, sent forward several scouts ; soon after there appeared a stout man covered with splendid armor, that certainly must have been Count d'Anjou . . ."

"And did he seem to you as brave as fame tells ?" interrupted Manfred.

"I know not whether brave, but prudent he certainly is, for he gave orders to his troops, the moment they crossed the bridge, not to advance in column, as the constable had thought, but to deploy right and left on the banks

of the river. Count Giordano, who stood upon a prominence with some of his officers watching the movements of the enemy, at the sight exclaimed: 'I knew too well that this would be the case, yet the error might be amended if the constable would return quickly and join me.' And he despatched the first, then the second, as many as five couriers; they all did like the raven of Noah—never returned. Agitated with impatience, our commander raised his face and saw . . . infamous spectacle! the Apulians disappearing in a shameful flight over the opposite mountains. He could not credit his own eyes, he could have stabbed any one who would have said they ran away; but he had finally to yield to the conviction of the bitter truth. 'Alas!' he exclaimed, overwhelmed with grief, 'it was a great deal worse than I feared; I was prepared for the blunder, but not for the treachery; and now, what shall we do?' he asked, turning to his followers, who all cried out together, 'Fight and die!'—'God forbid that I should allow this; preserve your lives, brave men, for a more generous and less desperate opportunity. I say more generous, because it is not virtue to throw away our lives inadvisedly; on some other occasion our lives may be of more use to our king. At San Germano we can easily prove that we were not the cowards, but the betrayed! Now my master sends me to you, Serene Highness, and begs you to hasten to the rescue, and . . .'

Manfred did not stop to hear the end. He leaped to his saddle and hastened towards Benevento, without even saluting the courier. This latter followed panting on foot; nor could he understand that after he had taken so much pains, after he had so kindly welcomed him in the beginning, now he had so uncharitably neglected him. He accused the stars, and his ill-luck, and did not think that 'the first bringer of unwelcome news hath but a losing office.'

On arriving at his royal seat of Benevento, Manfred sent for the Emir of the Saracens, Sidi Jussuff, of the race of Ben-izeyen, who, presenting himself and saluting his lord with every demonstration of respect, according to the Oriental custom, stood immovable before him,

awaiting his orders. Manfred thus spoke : "Count d'Angalone, have the German companies ready to march for San Germano in two hours ; you, Abu Jussuff, do the same with your Saracens ; you know that although we are believers in *Isa* (Jesus) yet we consider them as our most faithful subjects : go, and tell them that there is a short work for them, that the dragon threatens the moon, but that God, the compassionate, the merciful, hath decreed that it shall issue more bright from its dirty claws ; nor will victory be uncertain, for has not your prophet said : '*He who feeds on iniquity shall find his mouth full of dust*' ?" *

The Emir, crossing his hands on his breast, and bowing very low, was on the point of departing, when d'Angalone, turning to Manfred, said : "Please your Serene Highness, have you noticed in returning to the city what a night is threatening ? The road we have to go is very rough ; if the storm overtakes us, we will labor in vain, without proceeding a step."

"Weak is the faith that takes counsel of the weather," interrupted the Emir ; "the beast that *Allah* has made a companion of man looks to the sign and to the hand, not to the path, and if along the road he falls over the precipice, dies happy in his fidelity ; is man less gifted than the dog ? *The doom of God cometh to pass*, no one can escape it. *He causes the angel of death to descend with the spirit on whom he pleases among his servants*, and you are smitten, whether sitting at your table or fighting in battle ; *God is knowing, powerful*, and hath destined all that is to pass ; hence the best advice is obedience to the king."

Count d'Angalone, whom that doctrine of fatalism did not suit, was about replying ; but Manfred prevented him by a disdainful motion of the hand, and exclaimed, "It is destined ; the Emir has replied for me."

They left the hall. Manfred remained alone. Fierce thoughts rushed through his mind with the same celerity with which the clouds were passing at that moment

* All the words italicised are quotations from the Koran.

through the sky, and they were not less threatening. We will not describe them, nor could we, if we would. The two painful hours having passed, first the Emir, then d'Angalone, came to notify him that the Saracen and German troops were ready to start. Manfred, uttering a deep sigh, looked about the room, took the Emir by the arm, and, "Let us go," he said, "where destiny stronger than us leads. . . . Ah! my horse; . . . I had forgotten it. . . ."

"I have provided for that," replied d'Angalone; "it is ready saddled at the gate of the palace."

"Thanks, count, thanks; you have done well."

And they went down. Hardly had they issued from the door than a pitiful spectacle presented itself to the eyes of Manfred. Upon the lowest steps, in a sweet attitude of love, kneeled his wife and children; he had forgotten them! Have the cares of state such power as to make the soul forget so large a part of itself? Neither the gloomy light of the resin torches, nor their bituminous smoke, caused any alteration in their lovely faces, and though they felt within their tears bursting, yet they smiled in order not to afflict the king;—ideal power of tenderness! Why does Manfred lower his visor? Does he fear that his face might reveal his remorse at having forgotten them, or his pity at sight of them? Remorse and pity are both praiseworthy sensations; the former belongs to the creature destined to die, the latter suits even the angels. He who created the race of kings willed that they should be more than men; they must repulse tears from their eyes, they never ought to feel the cry of nature; but will they be able? Manfred approaches his dear ones trembling;—he must not tremble, he is a king! Is it not flesh which covers him? blood which runs through his veins? a heart which beats in his breast? . . .

"Elena! Yole! Manfredino! wife, children! Why have you come out thus in the open air? Don't you see how threatening the sky is, and the storm is about to burst?"

"Why do you depart without saying farewell to us?"

why do you depart without taking us with you?" replied the queen, questioning in her turn.

"With me! amidst the dangers of arms, amidst the rage of fierce soldiers, amidst the tumult of battles, amidst the dead, . . . amidst the flight?" and this last word escaped his lips almost in spite of himself.

"Shall we then remain far away from you, to be crushed by uncertainty more distressing than misfortune itself, and die of grief? Who can comfort you but I? If,—may God avert it!—you should be wounded, what would the world say of Queen Elena? A stranger's hand bound the wounds of the son of Frederick, because his wife dwelt far from the field. Have I so ill deserved of you that you would have me bear such a reproach?"

"But you see, we are about starting, nor could you follow us in the saddle; how shall we convey you? A few moments' delay may hurl me where . . . there is no rising."

"Oh! mind not that; I have provided: look, these are litters . . ."

"In truth, you will prevent our going fast."

"No, you go ahead, nor mind who follow you. Do not even turn back to look; we will follow at a distance; the sight of you will suffice us . . ."

"You will prevent my fighting . . ."

"Fear not! I will show you before rushing to the battle, this your Manfredino . . ." (the king bent down, placed both his hands upon the head of his little boy, exclaiming: "O my hope!") "and I will tell you to save him, for he is your blood; that your enemies will not spare him, if you yield . . ."

"I yield? when has ever Manfred yielded? when, O queen, has your husband returned conquered? We will conquer. . . ."

"And we, gathered in your tent, will pray unto the Lord to give you victory, not to look down upon your forehead marked by the anathema, to unbind what His vicar on earth has bound, for he has bound it unjustly, . . . to hear the prayers of the afflicted, . . . and protect the innocents."

"Do not, do not invoke the Eternal to look down upon Manfred; pray to Him for yourself, pray to Him for our children; you are worthy to be listened to, and He will listen: I will recommend myself to my sword."

And he turned to depart; but they threw themselves at his feet, embraced his knees, breaking forth with tearful voices: "Do not leave us, father! do not leave me, husband!"

"Come then, since you wish it, come to participate in my sorrows, in my death; you prefer my company to your lives, to your safety, and I accept you. Beware though, you will taste untold of bitterness, for the friend of the unhappy is more miserable than he; later you may repent; you do not believe me? I pity you; you know not how bitter misfortune is; how the love of self-preservation, innate in our own blood, torments us; you cannot know: but have your will. And Thou, merciful God, who gathereth the storm, and ruleth the thunderbolt, spare these innocents, look Thou mercifully down upon them; if I have sinned, let not these beloved heads bear the weight of my iniquities."

Thus spoke Manfred, deeply moved; then added: "Benincasa! Benincasa! take four hundred lancers, and act as escort to my royal family. Mark, Benincasa, this is my own blood; you also are a father, and know by experience what means—my blood: I recommend them to you."

"My beloved king," replied Benincasa, lifting his hand to his heart, "I will take more care of them than if they were my own children . . ."

"Enough!—guard them as you would your own; that will be sufficient for me."

Late was the night, and profoundly dark; the uncertain ray of neither moon nor star was visible through the clouds that enveloped the hemisphere; in such fearful obscurity as saddened the earth, even a flash of lightning would have been welcome. From the fury of the whirlwind that howled through the crags of the mountains, from the bellowing thunder of the tossing clouds, there arose a sound of woe and terror like the strange tumult

of a multitude of lost souls sighing and lamenting in divers tongues and horrid languages. Among those mountain paths, one warned by the noise of the torrent beneath that he was stepping on the edge of a precipice, stepped back, crying to his neighbor, "There is death ;" and the other, feeling his way on the other side, and finding that there also the path ended in a precipice, would reply, "Nor is there life on this side." They would hold by each other's hand, and lowering their heads, groping in the dark, often traversed unhurt the dangerous path ; many also climbed great distances on their hands and feet ; many clung to the rocks, and never left them until the storm abated from its fury. There were cases of men having their arms or legs broken by trees that, uprooted by the wind, fell from on high ; and even some that, struck on the head, fell lifeless in the path ; and others who, too sure of their own strength, but not sure of foot, were carried away by the force of the tempest, without even time to manifest by a cry their miserable death to their companions. The furious element absorbed them, as if too jealous to divide with others the power of fear, and as if resolved that no terror should be greater than his.

Through such turmoil the noble Manfred, mounted upon a generous battle-horse that he had chosen, notwithstanding that the Emir Jussuff had made him observe that he was white of the left foot, and hence of ill omen, rode boldly, trusting to the instinct and strength of the animal, who, as if to justify the trust that the rider placed in him, carried him safely with wonderful rapidity over a rough road full of impediments and danger. The officers of his suite, either because they rode less powerful horses, or because they had less brave hearts, could not keep up with him : so that he preceded them by a long distance. The legend relates that the souls of the dead along that road came out of their tombs, and carrying in their hands lighted torches, went before him, lighting the way, and that both the horse and the rider, not fearing these apparitions, availed themselves of that light to proceed safely. The chronicle also adds that Manfred, having exclaimed, "All

hail, and thanks to you, whoever you are, whether infernal or celestial spirits, that enlighten my way," the lights suddenly ceased, and immediately after there appeared a sceptred ghost, luminous with transparent light, as of a cloud that veils the disk of the moon, who, wonderful to relate, instead of sending forth rays of light, was surrounded by an atmosphere darker than the darkness of that night. He resembled the Emperor Frederick, although his face could not be described with precision, like an image in a dream that the mind does not completely form: he did not seem alive, not yet dead—rather like a person awakened after a long lethargy, who has not yet wholly recovered the use of his senses. This ghost seized the reins of the horse, and with a voice which, although it surpassed the roaring of the storm, yet was not heard by any one except Manfred, cried, "Welcome, my son; for more than twenty years I have waited for you at this pass:" and at the end of the words transported him with such rapidity, that the king, neither hearing nor feeling the horse's hoofs on the ground, imagined that he was running to the mouth of Vesuvius, to be thrown down into the infernal-lava: when of a sudden the ghost stopped, leaving the reins, and stretching his arm in the act of imprecating, disappeared with a horrid howl. The horse, that until then had run furiously, all of a sudden shied; and although Manfred used all his strength and skill, he was not able to make him advance a step, but rather, prancing, he reared more and more. His officers coming up to him, wondered that their horses, also shying, refused to advance. They lighted the Greek-fire in a lantern, and searched the ground: a ghastly corpse lay across the road. Who was he? how came he there? who could tell in that fearful night. Perhaps a guide fallen from the upper precipice, perhaps a peasant trampled by the preceding troops. Manfred ordered it to be removed, not to discourage his approaching soldiers, and be thrown in the nearest bush. Then moving on, agitated, but not cowed by such strange events, he fixed his eyes on the firmament, and said menacingly: "You

can tear the crown from my head, even my intellect, for which men have extolled me ; but I defy you to take away my constancy."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SARACEN.

MESSO.

Fuggite, o triste e sconsolate donne,
Fuggite in qualche più, sicura parte,
Chè i nemici già son dentro le mura.

SOFONISBA.

Ove si puô fuggir ? Che luogo abbiamo
Che ci conservi, o che da lor ci asconda,
Se l'aiuto di Dio non ci difende ?

SOFONISBA, *Tragedia Antica.*

MESSENGER.

Flee, O ye women, sad and comfortless,
Flee to some spot where ye may be secure.
Already are our foes within the walls.

SOFONISBA.

But whither can we flee ? Where is the place,
That can protect us, or conceal us from them,
If the Almighty one defend us not ?

M. G. M.



O, the Provençal has not conquered ; he has merely crossed the frontier, like the trader who from the Roman States passes into our kingdom. Let these be his glories ! let destiny reserve no better ones than these ! this we desire, this we hope, this we will strive for with our whole might. Let him exult in the grossness of his mind over the shame of such victory ;—the heavens have not granted him even the modesty that robbers have, of enjoying in silence the

fruits of infamy : verily, if he conquers not in this way, he will certainly not in any other ; the world knows what a warrior he is : the records of his enterprises are extant in Egypt, where he bought with gold a life that he had not dared to spend fighting for Christ.* Oh ! cause of God to such hands entrusted ! Was it too small a grief to see your Holy Sepulchre in the hands of the dogs, that there must also be added the greater shame of having your holy flag contaminated by this French robber ? Kingdoms are ill conquered by art ; and treachery is a road to disgrace, not to glory. Upon the road that leads to royal Naples rises now Manfred, armed with the sword of the Emperor Frederick, preceded by his eagle, accustomed from so many years of victory to rest on the tents of the conquered, surrounded by his faithful barons, who step by step recovered the kingdom, and then gave it to him. Different battles are now preparing for you than those of your Provence ; here are no vassals defended only by innocence, here no barons under the safeguard only of justice ; indeed, if these were our only defences, we would now surrender as conquered ;—you are invincible, as every one knows, against innocence ; but we have yet ten thousand Apulians and Germans, all the Saracens of Lucera, innumerable archers, impregnable walls, dangerous marshes, inaccessible mountains. But what are we saying of marshes, mountains, bulwarks ? Are we so degenerate that we need bulwarks for cuirasses ? Are we so fallen from ancient valor to need any other defence but our breasts ? Shall French pride boast of this unhopèd-for glory ? Shall Italian valor grieve at the unwonted shame ? But we will not dwell longer in such ignominious surmisings. In the open fields our fathers fought, and we will issue in the open fields ; let us go and make a generous amend for our brothers' faults, let us turn into bitter the sweet fruits of Italy in their mouths, let us make them feel that it was an ill moment

* Alluding to Charles being taken prisoner with his brother St. Louis by the Turks near Damietta, and ransomed in 1250. See Chapter VIII.

when they touched the Italian soil ; that our climate is unsuitable, our air pestilential to the lilies of France. Here arose, here live, and will live forever to victory, the Imperial Eagles :—perhaps at this moment Charles, the king of our kingdom ! advised by fear, is resolving to abandon these possessions, given him by his Roman pontiff, without even looking at them : it is too late,—the Alps are never crossed in vain. Son of an unhappy father was he who dared to invade the garden of the empire ; a widow before a bride, will be the lover of him who attacked the inheritance of the descendants of Constantine. From beyond the mountains they will see naught but the funeral rites of the fools that committed themselves to this adventurous enterprise ;—let them have the mourning since they had not the wisdom ; after the deed even the fool becomes wise : and indeed our thought, cheered by the favorable auspices, flattered by the glory of success, rejoices to look upon the future and contemplate you all, venerable with honorable old age, in the halls of your castles, surrounded by your children and children's children, earnestly begged to relate the history of the many trophies hanging from the walls. You will then look smiling on them with the knowledge that you will live immortal in the memory of your descendants, and will begin thus : “ It is now many and many years since a race of barbarians moved from beyond the mountains to infest our beautiful country ;—pray, children, peace to their souls, for they too were baptized Christians ! —but they left their bodies to the fields, their arms to us, to their children tears, and the grief of not being able to avenge them ;—fortunate only in this, that dying, we could not take away from them the glory of perishing by our sword.”

Thus spoke Manfred in the presence of his barons, when he arrived at San Germano : and if he had addressed them merely to obtain glory as an orator, his desire would have been fulfilled, for they received it with such a tumult of clapping of hands, and approving cries, that it seemed as if all San Germano was tumbling down. Nevertheless, not all those that applauded believed what

Manfred said, and he least of all : yet his condition was not thus far desperate, for San Germano was really a strongly fortified place, and he superintended constantly its further strengthening, nor ever spared himself, for by day and by night he inspected the sentries, went round with the patrols, rewarded the deserving, kindly admonished the indolent. The usages of warfare of those times rendered the place impregnable, except by a blockade ; but Manfred had provided for this by storing provisions for two years ; nor could the enemy surround the place in such manner that there would not remain some way open to the country. The Count of Provence saw all these difficulties, and almost despaired of success : he might have ventured an assault, and would have attempted it ; but those walls appeared too strong and too carefully guarded to run the risk with any good hopes. Should he be repulsed, as it seemed probable, he would have slackened the ardor of the French—who are giants in prosperous fortune, and are discouraged beyond all reason in reverses—and lose his reputation of invincible, that so much aided him. Should he fail in the attempt, there would result from it a series of evils, the least of which would have been to renounce entirely the enterprise. It did not seem to him, nor was it prudent, after so many trials undergone, so many desired expectations, so many designs, to entrust the success of his undertaking to the uncertain issue of a battle, in which the experience of his troops, the brave knights armed *cap-d-pie* at a great expense, would have availed him for nothing. He knew also too well that those many Romans who had joined him did not come to aid him, but to participate in the spoils conquered by the valor of his troops ; and that at the first disaster they would depart as fast as they came, spreading everywhere the report of his defeat, and magnifying it in order to excuse their flight and desertion. On the other hand, inactivity injured him as much as defeat ; provisions were getting scarce, the treasury empty, and the Romans, as we have said, accompanied him for gain, not for loss ; if chance opened to him no way of safety, he felt that he was lost. True it is, though,

that in his face he showed the opposite ; and contrary to his usual habit he smiled often ; and if he saw any captain or soldier discouraged, he would call him by name, and say kindly : “ Courage, for we have overcome the bridge, and with the aid of St. Martin we will overcome the wall ; *watchfulness will conquer ill-fortune.*” In this wise he encouraged others when he himself was on the point of despairing.

Whilst thus Manfred, in spite of his beautiful talk of coming out in the open field, remained shut up within the fortress—not because he failed in courage, for on the contrary he was very brave, but because he distrusted his *faithful barons*—and Charles, who, unable to show himself a lion, watched with the sagacity of a fox the opportune moment, there happened at San Germano a circumstance, serious in itself, more serious in its consequences, and it was the following :

Many of the principal captains of King Manfred were walking one day upon the battlements of the walls, among whom Count Giordano d'Angalone, and the Emir Abu Jussuff, conversing, as is customary among soldiers, of the affairs of the war ; and as usual, from one subject passing to another, Count Giordano came to speak of present events, and with satisfactory arguments asserted that the enemy's army would inevitably soon be dismembered, for it would have been folly more than daring to advance into the interior of the Neapolitan state, leaving San Germano in its rear. Nor was the Count of Provence so poor a general as to commit such irreparable errors ; yet delay was almost ruinous, for he knew that he was short both of provisions and money for his soldiers. As to these, they never trust to promises : with them gold only can make them go forward, and iron go backwards ; more than any other people in the world they follow the ancient maxim, that, where there is nothing to gain, one surely loses. And thus he kept on, expressing other opinions ; finally concluding, that it was a most wise act of the king to abandon Benevento, and come with all the forces he was able to muster to defend San Germano. At this the Emir replied that he was speaking

very wisely ; but at the same time San Germano came very near not being reinforced on his account ; and if they had followed his (Count d'Angalone's) advice, the fortress would by this time have been taken ; and with Charles in their front the fate of the kingdom would have been soon settled.

Count d'Angalone, ill brooking such a reproach in the presence of his companions of arms, replied that he knew nothing of what he was talking about ; he had never advised Manfred aught but what was soldierly ; it would have been treachery to have stopped him from coming to the rescue of San Germano ; that, with his permission, he must be mistaken. The bystanders enjoying greatly the garrulous dispute of the two, surrounded them curiously to see how it would end.

The Emir, piqued at these words, exclaimed, "Then you, count, have committed a treachery, though by the soul of my father I would sustain that you are not a traitor. Do you not remember when, for fear of wetting your collar or spoiling your sleep, you wanted to detain the king at Benevento because the night was getting rainy?"

There arose all round a mocking laugh ; d'Angalone became red-hot in the face, and with bitter words reproved the Emir ; this latter on his part was not silent, and the dispute grew warm to such a point, that the count without further ceremony told him that he lied in his throat, and he would prove it by all manner of means ; that if crazy people in his country were worshipped as saints, in his they were whipped to teach them wisdom ; that to assail a squadron of cavalry was a very different thing from plundering a caravan of traders ; and to lead armies differed very much from leading sheep ;—and many other insulting expressions he added, which the Emir did not at all deserve, for he was a very brave and worthy military man. But passion never measures words or blows ; and the man whose face becomes very red from anger, will afterwards turn pale for shame. The Emir, although he felt the lie direct as the point of a poniard in his heart, curling his lips in a certain biting smile of his, replied mockingly :

“My lord count, you being a tall man, measure your faith with the clouds; and as to your duties, you take counsel with the moon. In truth, count, I feared in that night that the wind would blow out the fire of your loyalty along the road. Before going into battle, you had better come to some understanding with the enemy not to strike with the edge or the point of the sword, and not to hurt each other, and particularly not to strike on the head: and be careful not to forget your cloak, so that in returning heated from the field you may not catch a cold.”—And continued in this strain. In the meanwhile, the laughter increased all around, and sharp retorts flew backward and forward. D'Angalone, unskilled in that battle of epigrams, knowing that for one he would get one hundred in reply, unable to restrain himself, having lost the light of reason, carried on by passion, raised his fist and struck the Emir so violently on the face, that the blood spurted from his nose, where he hit him. Jussuff, stunned by the blow, but more so by the insult, put his hand to the scimitar; the same did Giordano, and they would have come to bloodshed, if the mutual friends interposing had not prevented them, ready now to prevent the consequences of a contest that they had encouraged with pleasure, by inciting one against the other. Certainly these men had no suspicion that such great evil would result from it; but knew they not that when passions are excited, no one knows where or when they will subside, and that having no power to moderate them, all our wisdom is reduced to never touching them.

They led the Emir, bleeding, to his quarters; and Giovanni Villani narrates * that the Saracens, seeing him so ill used, and hearing the cause of it, became so exasperated, that, taking up arms, they rushed upon the Christians, who, having received them with their visors lowered, there arose a terrible fight, with the worst of the Saracens. Our chronicle, however, relates that they truly intended to *raise the devil, and worse*, set fire to the town, murder and kill all, happen what might afterwards. But the Emir prevented

* Hist., Book VII.

it, crying, that he desired no one to be so bold as to mix in his affairs, that it was a private offence, and had to be settled privately ; that he would deem it an eternal shame to himself, that any one should show himself readier than he was to vindicate his own honor : let them then retire. The first who should dare to advance a step he would cleave his head from his shoulders.—“So that,” adds the chronicles, “the Saracens, persuaded by the speech, and more so by the conclusion, consented, although unwillingly, to stay quiet.”

On the morrow, the Emir, calling his secretary, handed him a paper carefully folded, scented with musk, sealed with green silk, and wax, ordering him to carry it to Count Giordano d'Angalone. The secretary having fulfilled his orders, the count broke the seal and read : “To the praised in the faith of Isa, and imitator of the precepts of his faith, Giordano d'Angalone, count, captain of the fourth company of the German horses. In San Germano, this last day of the moon of Gemmadi, year of the Hegira 643.—*Behold, thou hast covered me with dust in the presence of our friends, thou hast rendered me impotent to fight even our own enemies : is it written in any law or commandment of thy God to strike the friend who hath not offended thee, or whom thou hast first offended ? Does it become thy valor, or thy fame as a brave knight, that thou shouldst do thus to the loyal servants of thy king ? Now let it be known to thy worship, if thou art valiant, that I do challenge thee to come out to-morrow after the first hour, upon the place where thou hast struck me, so that we may fight together. Come alone if thou wishest, or with thy followers, for this matters little, and I will prove to thee with sword and lance that thou hast not behaved as becomes a valorous baron. If I, as I hope, shall kill thee, my sword will again resume its edge against all, which now, by thy fault, it has not, except against thee alone ; if thou comest not, I will not abandon thee, even if thou shouldst fly beyond the mountains or beyond the seas ; if thou comest not, I will proclaim thee throughout Christendom for a coward, and vile in the will of God and His commandments, in that of the*

saints in holiness, and in that of all the honorable knights. God the Great, and Muhammad His prophet, vouchsafe long life and grant special gifts to any one that will read this letter correctly, and make the way short and the embassy acceptable to him who will consign it to the above said count, Captain Giordano d'Angalone. The servant of God, Jussuff, of the race of Ben-izeyen, Emir of the Saracens of Apulia."

Count Giordano, having carefully read the cartel, opened a little drawer, and taking out a few *agostaris*, placed them in the hands of the Saracen herald, saying: "Keep these with my thanks." Then he added in a lower tone: "Tell your master that I am ready to do all he desires; that to-morrow I expect him in courtesy to my table, and soon after breakfast we will enter the lists, where God will give the victory to whomever He willeth."

This affair could not be kept so secret that it did not reach the ear of Manfred, who on account of the times could ill afford to lose either of those leaders. Wishing therefore to remedy this matter, he did, what he would never have thought of doing, namely, rendered more fatal to himself and to his interests.

Count d'Angalone, obeying peremptory orders, appears in the presence of the king; he comes forward with uncertain steps, his head bent low, pale in the face, sure of having incurred his lord's displeasure; receiving no order to approach, nor even to stop, he stood at a respectful distance—further off than usual, however; only once he dared to lift his eyes to Manfred (oh, how discomforting is the anger of a revered person to a sensitive soul!), he had not the courage to withstand his look, and lowered them immediately to the ground. The king sat in the severity of his justice, looking fixedly, scowlingly, at the poor count. After a good quarter of an hour of silence, during which there seemed to d'Angalone that all the generations of men from Adam downward were standing around contemplating his shame, the voice of the king began gravely to speak thus: "We leave you to decide, count, whether it arises from your king's suspicions, or from others' actions, that he cannot nowadays distin-

guish his friends from his enemies. Whilst an army of barbarians, greedy for our estates, intent on our total extermination, stands drawn in battle array in our front, and teaches us to stand united in our guard if we desire safety, there is one who dares to disgrace with the lowest of insults a beloved leader, attached to us through honorable services, through long and often proved fidelity ; a leader who constitutes the principal force in our present defences, so that, if he should withdraw or betray us, we should have no other escape than recommending our soul to the saints ; and such a one dares then to call Count Caserta infamous !

“We leave you to decide, Count Giordano, which of these two is more traitor, and deserves more a mark of infamy ; if crimes are to be weighed by the injury which they cause, and certainly they are, the latter took away from us his person with a few troops of vassals ; the former takes away our means of defence, obstructs our way to victory, hands bound to the enemy ourselves, our children, our subjects ; nor stops he there, but with unheard-of presumption despises the laws of the kingdom, despises the person of the king, who would rather be buried under the ruins of his throne than suffer his royal authority to be in the slightest manner set aside ; and sends cartels, and proposes duels, and prepares weapons under our own eyes. It is so unusual, it is so grave a transaction, Count Giordano, that we, as a wise sovereign, fearing that our ire may disturb our mind, and affect our judgments, have desired, before pronouncing judgment, to consult you in your opinion : speak.”

“My king,” with slow and broken voice answered Count Giordano, “I acknowledge myself guilty ; I did not send the cartel, I only accepted it, because so it behooved any one to do who wears spurs and sword of a knight. I am ready to accept cheerfully and calmly any severe punishment that your Serene Highness may be willing to inflict ; only I beg you not to degrade me so low in your eyes as to compare me to that wretch, di Caserta ; this, I will not say my own, but the merits of my ancestor

in support of your house, do not deserve, nor the years of unstained renown . . .”

And he would have continued, but Manfred interrupted him with less harsh expression, yet still severe.

“We accept your submission, count. Will you remit your quarrel into our hands?”

“I could not refuse, even if I wished to, convinced that whatever your Serene Highness may dispose, will be according to the rules of honor.”

“In the meanwhile, surrender your sword; retire to the prisons of the palace; you are prisoner of the king.”

D'Angalone, laying down his sword, and bowing to the king, retired. Manfred, inclined to hope well by the submission of the count, sent immediately for the Emir, desiring that that day should not pass without pacifying the two.

As a man of experience, knowing that the Orientals are more than anything else affected by appearances, he called the primary officers of his household, filled the tables full of papers, ordered the entrance hall to be filled with orderlies and couriers: in fine, he put forward an ostentatious display of state affairs.

Hardly had the Emir placed his foot in the royal hall, without being announced, for thus had been ordered, than Manfred, dismissing all the other officers, rushed to him, speaking with affectionate accents: “Welcome the blessed of the Lord, Abu Jussuff, worthy descendant of the Ben-izeyên! The presence of the faithful servant is as sweet to his king as the perfume of myrrh, *as the water sent down in abundance from the rain-cloud that it may bring forth corn and herbs*; come, sit at my side, here on my left. The king who listens on his right hand to the advice of the archangel, and on his left to that of the friend, and bears before him as a sign on the forehead the fear of God—that king walks *in the right way, in the way of those whom He hath filled with grace*; and his steps will lead to gladness, and a blessing will be in his house from father to son for everlasting.”

At this point the Emir pointed to his bruised face,

wishing, as it seemed, to begin *ex abrupto*. Manfred did not await for him to speak, but hastily continued : “ May God and the Prophet vouchsafe thee all thy desires ! We know, faithful Emir, what thou wishest to say, and have called thee for this ; for our sleep last night was not so tranquil as the others, nor the light of this morn so shining as before, nor has the warbling of the morning birds of the Lord cheered us. Behold, it hath pleased Him, *who causeth to laugh and to weep*, to sadden this our servant, and fill his mouth with *bitter drink*. *Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, let His will be done*. The star of the Benizeyen has ceased to shine on his race ; the faithful Jussuff has been vilified where the Creator has impressed His image ;—but the crow is black in the face of heaven, the dove white ; nor has the reptile, although it has lifted its head, ever been able to contaminate the flesh of the eagle—it has only stained its wings with poison. God protects the strength of the lion, and the name of the just, for they are both His, and emanation of His power ; yet if the offence was small, the sin was great. As from the grain of sand to the mountain, likewise from an unaccomplished thought in the secret of the mind to the greatest crime, all is in the presence of Allah and his Prophet, *and one day all will be weighed*, and every sin will receive its punishment according to its deserts ; thus before the vassals pay to *Munchir* and *Nechir* the *penalty of the grave*, we kings of the earth are deputed to make them suffer punishment in this life ; and we intend to punish the insult offered thee in such way, that thou shalt feel satisfied . . . ”

Manfred intended to continue ; but the Emir breaking him short amidst that whirlwind of Oriental metaphors, raised his voice, exclaiming :

“ Offspring of emperors ! The man that calls another in a question of honor is worthy of the dust, and that his children should beg the bread of infamy from the enemies of his life . . . ”

“ Is it perchance the mouth of calumny that wishes to avenge thee ? Or is it the arm of an assassin that undertakes thy defence ? Are we not thy *Melek* to whom the

Prophet has granted full dominion over thy life, over thy goods ? ”

“ Not over my honor.”

“ Then if we should ask a sacrifice for the good of our people and of ourselves, will it avail nothing with thee, the benefits which we and our fathers have bestowed on thee ? nothing to have removed thee and thine from the mountains of Sicily, where you shared your lives with the beasts of the field ? ”

“ To what purpose do you recall what I know ? I will kill my wives, my children, my horse, my dog, and myself over them, if you desire it . . . ”

“ We desire not thy blood—rather thy life and thy fame we desire. Thou wilt see a noble knight ask thy pardon before an assemblage of knights ; thou wilt see him cover his head *with the dust that thou hast trampled upon* as with a crown of glory ; thou wilt see him kneeling at thy feet as to the throne of his king : what more wilt thou ? There is a limit to revenge ; what does thy Koran teach in the Sura Aaraf ? *Pardon willingly, do good to your fellow-men, contend not with the ignorant.* Does not our gospel teach the same ? ”

“ My Prophet is my heart. The count has seen my blood, he has *covered me with dust*, nor can I forgive him ; indeed, if you desire it, I can give my spirit to *Eblis* for seven thousand years, that he may torment it at his will ; indeed, I can drag the chain of seventy cubits through fire and brimstone all over *Gehenna* for the time to which Allah condemns the prevaricators : but I cannot forgive the count, for he *has covered me with dust*.”

“ Remit, O Emir, your quarrel to your king ; Manfred begs it of you.”

“ I have remitted it to the edge of my sword ; ” and he drew it sparkling from its sheath, and placing it under the eyes of Manfred : “ Ask it to remit it to you ; if it replies, it is yours.”

“ Jussuff, we will it so.”

“ Do you will it so ? Be it so ; to-morrow let the hand that struck me be brought in this turban with a paper in its fingers, containing the request for pardon, and I

will send it back to you sealed with my seal ; then I will call myself satisfied, and will desist from the quarrel."

"This is African cruelty, and my kingdom will never be stained by such barbarism. Come, Jussuff, since thou wilt not remit the quarrel, thou canst at least postpone it."

"Postpone it? know you what is written in the book of the wise?—*When a beam begins to rot, change it, otherwise it will fall on thy head, and upon that of thy family ; if thou allowest the blood to rest upon the wound, death will reap the fruit of your negligence. Sleep upon the offence, and thou wilt become worthy that the offence sleepeth upon thee.*"

"Then go, faithful servant ; incite to slaughter both Saracens and Christians, open with thy own hands the gates, and deliver us to the enemy : indeed, in this very town a wicked Emir killed before the altars its glorious founder, St. Bertarius : repeat thou the wicked deed, for we will not be the less innocent, thou the less guilty.—Remit to me your quarrel ; thy king begs it of thee."

"I cannot, son of Frederick, I cannot . . ."

Manfred rose impetuously, and, seizing the Emir by the arm, led him to the balcony, from which could be seen upon the declivity of Mount Cassino the ruins of the city of Eraclea, destroyed with fire and sword by the fury of the Vandals.—Those relics appeared solemn, and truly worthy of the giants of Rome, who not only emulated, but with the fragments of their greatness surpassed in magnificence all that which the miserly ambition of modern times attempts to raise.—"There was a powerful city," said Manfred, "now it lies a heap of stones and rubbish : it is now six centuries since a fierce people descended from the Alps, met discordant and jealous citizens, and overran our beautiful country. Look," he added with more sonorous voice, pointing to those ruins, "the history of the deeds of the Vandals is composed of such pages. Such will become San Germano, and by your fault ; but when future ages shall have hidden the memory of my kingdom and my name, there will ever a voice arise from these ruins that will

cry to posterity : 'Here a valiant king was betrayed by an unfaithful servant.'"

"Oh, if I could! . . . But I cannot, . . . Manfred, I cannot.

"Enough ! since prayer is of no avail, I will command. My people are my children, and one day I shall have to give an account to Him who intrusted them to my rule. In virtue of our royal authority we order thee to defer this quarrel ;—the command of the king, whatever it may be, is holy."

"There are those who would deny this, son of Frederick, but I will not be the one. Behold," and thus speaking he struck aslant his scimitar against the pavement, so that it broke in pieces, "behold, you break the sword in my hand, take away the strength from my arm, extinguish in my heart the spirit of life, and fill it with the *seed of shame* ; I am become as one unborn, as one buried ; men will see me, but will not recognize me, since the Emirs of the race of Ben-izeyen were wont to appear with the splendor of the rays of glory. Perhaps a day will come in which you will call for my aid, and I will reply : 'Give me the arm which you have taken away from me ;' you will call me in the name of honor, and I will say to you : 'O my lord, how can I hear you ? you have stupefied my heart, have closed the ear of my glory.' —*Praised be Allah, Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and of all that is between them, the Potent, the Forgiving ! Lord of the day of reckoning ! Blessed be Thou in Thy thoughts and in Thy deeds ;* but why hast Thou willed that the glorious race of the Ben-izeyen should end in dishonor ? I honor Thee, O Lord, I worship Thee *with my face upon the stone* ; but why hast Thou inspired the heart of my *Melek* to condemn me to feed on dust ? Oh ! my years fly and pass away in sadness even into eternity. Had I but died a day before, the *black day* would have been spared to my eyes. Ah ! often did my loving father say, the worst is to live too long . . ." And he departed desolate, not tearful ; but overcome by such grief as a strong heart can feel, the sight of which would excite more wonder than compassion.

Manfred remained immovable for some time after the Emir had left. Then he struck his forehead with his hands, exclaiming: "Generous soul, and worthy of me! Behold! crime has formed alliance with virtue, and they both advance together to drag me from my throne! Wonders have already appeared in the heavens! This is a prodigy of the earth. . . . Be firm, Manfred, your time is approaching."

"The enemy! the enemy have taken the town!" This cry suddenly strikes the ear of Manfred, and makes him start terror-struck. Was it a fancy of his agitated mind? No; he hears indeed a turmoil and precipitous running, a confused crying: "The enemy! the enemy have taken the town!"

The face of the king was wont to become pale when he thought on danger; when it was near it became red. He put on his iron gauntlets, seized his shield, called his squire to fasten his helmet, then he chose a lance—for the rest he was already fully armed—and he rushed out of the hall, crying to all those he met: "Noble barons, come at least to die valiantly!"

The same tumult of cries and tramping of horses reached the ears of Queen Elena, who, overcome by past sufferings, lay sick in bed. The gentle Yole sat near her bed, with her head leaning on the left side, often kissing her; Manfredino, sitting at the foot, often joined his infantile hands and prayed Jesus to restore his mother's health.

"Yole! Yole!" said Elena, raising her head, "do you hear? it seems to me a cry of battle. . . . Holy mother of God! it comes near; go to the balcony, see what is happening."

Yole ran hastily to the balcony, and, "The enemy!" she cries, "the enemy! mother. . . .!"

"The enemy!" repeats Elena, sitting up in bed.

"They are about forty; . . . three seem to be the leaders; one has a black shield with drops of silver, the other has for device a heart pierced by an arrow, the third has a white flag . . . with red eagle, . . . it is the flag of the Florentine Guelphs. . . . What blows! mercy on

us! what blows! they drive everything before them, . . . how many they kill and wound!"

"Come, . . . support me . . . so that I may see them."

"There is Manfred! What a whirlwind of horses and knights! . . . the dust hides them all. . . . I see nothing more."

"Let me look on the arm of the king!" said Elena, and prepared to descend from the bed.

"The dust is clearing off; . . . our father has conquered. . . . Oh! how they run; . . . oh! how he pursues them at full gallop . . . ! They are already far off; . . . they have disappeared."

In order that our kind reader might learn how this event happened, we will inform him that, a little outside the walls of San Germano, out of the Roman gate,* somewhat to the left, there existed several wells between the city and the encampment of Charles, where the grooms both of the French and Neapolitans went to draw water, and often led the very horses there to drink. Charles might have easily infected this water, but considering that he would have deprived his own army of it, as well as the enemy, who, on the other hand, was well provided with it inside the walls, he let it alone; the more so inasmuch that from that mingling of people he hoped, without really knowing why, that there might arise a good opportunity to assail the town. The Neapolitan grooms did not come out through the large gate, but from a little door that was near it, and the moment they were out it was closed again with heavy iron bars. It would have been temerity rather than courage to attempt, by unexpectedly assailing these grooms, to enter promiscuously in the city while these ran away into it, nor did Charles dare order it, fearing every man would refuse it as certain death, and also as being of doubtful success. Two French knights, the brothers Bocard and Jouan Vandamme, and a Florentine knight, Stoldo Giacoppi dei Rossi, standard-bearer of the Italian Guelphs, together with some fifty other soldiers accustomed to the most risky enterprises, agreed to make the attempt. Early in the morning of the tenth of February, they concealed themselves within a ditch, which the

night before they had covered over with briars, and which hid them like a thatched roof; there they remained waiting until the grooms came to fetch water. The ruse succeeded to the best of their expectation. The Neapolitan grooms came out from the town carelessly towards sunset, going to the wells, where, meeting some of the French grooms, they began to insult them both with words and fists, crying in mockery of the count: "Where is our Charlot? Where is Charlot?"—The French grooms answered back, and hence arose the most fearful hand fight that was ever seen; which, as it was fought without weapons, or for some reason that has not come down to us, is distinguished in the chronicles of the time by the name of *badalucco*. At this point the hidden knights, issuing from their hiding place, assailed the Apulian grooms, and very soon drove them to flight. Those within the town seeing them appear opened the little gate, so that they might take refuge within, and when noticing the enemies behind them, they attempted to shut it, they were not in time, for pursued and pursuers rushed in with the impetuosity of a river, and wonderfully swift, passed over it. They had, however, time to let down the portcullis, which, falling heavily, separated six knights from their fellows, and probably crushed as many with its iron points. Those that had entered, nothing daunted by that first check, advanced further, striking right and left, and driving the unprepared Apulians before them till they almost reached the royal palace. Here Manfred issued forth, accompanied by his best barons, and began a terrible engagement; this did not long last doubtful, for the pursued taking courage, turned about and repulsed the enemy. The crowd more and more increased around the French, who, despairing now of success, turned their backs to those whom they had at first attacked. Indeed, retreat could not have saved them; it would have been better, therefore, to die with wounds on their breasts; but if we could reason with fear as to the possibility of escape, we would see more brave deeds than take place nowadays.

The Count of Provence, notified of this occurrence (for the chronicle narrates, although with slight appear-

ance of truth, that this ambushade was attempted unknown to him), turned to the knights who surrounded him, and spoke thus : "Knights, shall we abandon our brothers in the hands of the enemy, because they were more valòrous than we?"—So saying, he seized his heavy mace, for, from old habit, he never took off his armor when he was in camp, and rushed out of his tent. Tradition states that on the way he exclaimed : "O glorious Saint Martin of Tours ; we make a vow to present to your sanctuary a solid golden candlestick, if you will enable us to save those valiant knights of ours !"

Let us see what the flower of French chivalry can do. They had arrived an arrow's distance from the walls, when the Neapolitans darted their javelins. At that first discharge many knights lost their horses, many horses their knights ; those that followed, unable to restrain their horses coming in full gallop, stumbled over them : hence there arose a sudden confusion, a sort of wavering all along the line. Charles, however, had run ahead, and preceded them at the distance of three lances ; they rallied, and, bolder than before, spurred after him. A new discharge of javelins succeeded, and a new confusion. In such manner they could not accomplish aught : the count perceived this, and thought of a remedy ; he dismounts from his horse, takes off the saddle, and placing it over his head, continues his way towards the walls ; his followers imitate him, and through this expedient, better protected, they reached the Roman gate. Here they were assailed by a shower of missiles, iron pointed beams, and every sort of weapons thrown by the besieged ; while on the part of the assailants there was no reply made, but a fearful and incessant hammering of maces against both the gate and the postern. Charles above every other hammered desperately against the small gate, and at every blow one could see flying around nails, splinters and clouds of dust. Not being all able to work around the gates, some with unadvisable temerity attempted to escalate the walls ; but their strength failing, part of them, pulled down by their own weight, grazing the walls and leaving against it the skin of their hands and face, fell headlong to the

ground, a heap of mangled bones ; others, having reached the battlements, repulsed by a spear on the breast, waving their arms in the air, would fall cutting a curve in the sky ; some fell wounded by their own weapons, some by falling upon the spears of those standing below. There were cases in which those falling killed the companions upon whom they fell, and they by a strange chance remained unhurt. Death revelled in full sway.

Convinced now by such bloody experiment that in this manner they were unable to ascend, the French were about to retire, when a voice arose to encourage them, crying : "The gate is broken !" And in truth Charles, hammering with his mace, had done so much, that the little gate had fallen from its hinges, and he, followed by his knights, had passed the threshold. At the same moment that he stepped inside, a shower of arrows covered all his body without wounding him, for he was predestined ; but one of these arrows passed through the bars of the visor of young Joinville, reputed the most gallant and brave young knight, and piercing through his left eye, entered the brain : he fell, saddened not by his premature death, but by the thought of his aged father left desolate in the vast castle of his ancestors. Poor father ! of several children this one only had been left to him, his only hope and comfort in his weary old age ; it would have been mercy to have spared him ! The good old baron in his secret heart had prepared a wife for him, his neighbor's daughter, whom he knew the young knight had met under the oak ; he sought for this oak, and on its bark he found traced the names of the lovers, and drawing his poniard, with a hand trembling with age and joy, he had carved his own, as of a hand imposed upon them to bless them.—Poor father. Strangers and mercenary people laid him down on his bier, and distant relatives inherited his castle. It was perhaps pity for the brave youth, or perhaps natural hesitation of fear, that arrested the French on the threshold of the small gate. Charles turns his head, sees them wavering, and exclaims : "Does this seem a gate to pass without toll ? We have paid it ; let us then march on to victory."

Having passed through the gate, there was yet the portcullis to be overcome. The slaughter recommenced, for the Neapolitans from behind the gratings darted arrows incessantly, and the French had none to reply; they crowded about the timbers, and struck them such fearful blows with their axes, that had they not been covered over with brass, they would have scattered them in splinters, and opened the way; but the brass resisted their fury; the vain attempts proved it to be a useless work, which could not be accomplished except with long time and hard labor.

Another incident was added to dishearten them. The brothers Vandamme, Stoldo dei Rossi and the few left of their companions were flying toward the gate. When they were within twenty steps of it, seeing the portcullis lowered, recognizing their companions, ashamed to be caught in that act of flying, knowing there was no means of escape, they turned desperately back, and yelling fiercely rushed against their pursuers: but it was in vain; for Manfred arrived thundering, and assailants issued from everywhere, pressing upon them. After a few more moments of bestial fight, in which they fought even with their teeth, totally exhausted, they threw up those few weapons that had remained to them, and asked for quarter. Any one who reads may imagine how bitter was this sight to those who stood outside the portcullis. It is told of one baron who was so blinded by rage, that he inserted his hand armed with a battle axe through the gratings, thinking that, by throwing it, he might reach the fight that was going on twenty and more steps distant from him; a blow falling from the sword of Giordano Lancia, severed it near the elbow, and taught him never to insert it again through any portcullis gratings; and the chronicle states that he never did it again. The fears of the Count of Provence now were realized; he thought of sounding a retreat; the attempt to secure a victory by valor was lost, there only remained the chance of accomplishing it by good fortune.

Evening was approaching. Manfred, after the surrender of the brothers Vandamme, of Stoldo and only six others of the fifty that had attempted the ambuscade, was about

to order the lifting of the portcullis in order to rush upon the enemy, and repulse him from the walls. All at once he hears on his rear a running of people, and a wild cry of "The enemy!—the enemy!" he turns his head and perceives a flag flying on the turret of the gate of the Rapido which did not look like his; he trained his sight, rubbed his eyes, looked again, and asked of Count Calvagno, who stood beside him: "The Lord aid us; that does not seem our flag. Look at it, count, for the air is thick, and we do not discern well."

"O my good king," replied Count Calvagno, "you have not been mistaken; the flag is blue, but within are the lilies of France."

"How can it be? Are not the Saracens on guard on those walls?" And furiously spurring his horse, he rode in that direction.

While he rushes to inquire into the matter, we will narrate how it all happened. Guy de Montfort, the best master of war that the French army possessed, and who, being in the most intimate councils of Charles, participated in all his plans, observing the progress of the attack of which he had disapproved, thought that, since they had begun, he would strive to render its results of the least possible injury to the French. Therefore, taking some companies of Burgundian troops, whilst Charles was fighting furiously before the gate, he marched around San Germano, forded the river Rapido, and presented himself unobserved before the gate of that name; the further he advanced the less noise he heard; he raised his eyes to the battlements, there was not a sentry visible; he looked to the turrets, not even a guard; he wondered, advanced cautiously fearing some ambuscade. They arrive under the walls, saw no one; lean the ladders against them and began to ascend; not a person looks out. Mount upon the battlements; they are deserted. "God hath blinded them!" exclaims Montfort devoutly. "God hath blinded them!" repeat the soldiers, and advance further. He fortifies the walls, places his bravest troops in the turrets, and hoists his flag there; he descends, opens the city gate; and despatches messengers to Charles, asking him to hasten on

that side, for the city was taken. The news reached Charles just as he was about ordering the retreat. He regained his fallen spirit, and since he was for that day in love with St. Martin of Tours, "O glorious baron," exclaimed he, signing himself with the sign of the cross, "two will be the golden candlesticks that I will present to your temple of Tours, of twenty pounds each!" His troops also took new courage at the news, and he, ordering that they should still pretend to insist in their attack on that side, starts for the place where fortune had fought for him.

Manfred learned on his way there, that the report of his having refused free field to their Emir against Angalonne having been spread among the Saracens, they had abandoned their posts, and retired to their quarters to weep over the head of Jussuff, as if he were buried; and that the enemy, taking advantage of the occasion, scaled the walls, and had taken possession of them. Manfred was disturbed, but not disheartened on this account, and hastening to the relief, passed under the quarters of the Saracens and called: "Jussuff! Jussuff."

"What wills the *Melek* from the beast that has speech?" replied the Emir, appearing over the terrace with a mournful face.

"Did I not foretell it to thee? Through you the enemy are within the city; come out to the rescue..."

"How can I without a sword?"

"I will give thee mine."

"And who will give me the arm?"

"The battle."

"And the heart?"

"I will tear it from thy breast if ever I reach thee," cried Manfred, angered, "accursed in the soul of thy father, in the holiness of thy faith!" and without dallying further, gallops on, eager to come to battle.

And behold the strife raging in different parts of the city with different success! Night having supervened, it rendered it still more frightful. The French, who had entered it by surprise, now showed themselves worthy to have conquered it by valor; repulse did not shake them. Set upon from above, from the sides, in front, they returned

to the assault with wonderful courage : it was not an ordered battle, but an infinite number of skirmishes fought in the streets, and in the squares ; every corner of a street presented a new defence to the Neapolitans, every house a bulwark ; from both sides resounded loudly in the dark the war-cry : "*Monjoy ! Monjoy ! France et Saint Martin ! Swabia ! Swabia ! Manfred and the Imperial Eagle !*" The troops drunk with blood rushed impetuously, blindly striking right and left both enemies and friends. To a terrible darkness succeeded a more terrible light : fires broke out on every side ; scenes presented themselves worthy only for demons to look upon ; arms, men, horses in a heap ; the face of the dying more ghastly by that lurid light, the face of the fighters more threatening ; arms and glittering swords, as if suspended in the vacuum, appearing from the darkness, striking down and disappearing ; wounded men with agonizing cries disappearing in the darkness, and reappearing through the reflection of the flames, showing at every instant their fast approach to death ; imploring looks answered by murderous blows, and these avenged by still more bloody homicides ; blood calling for blood ; some who killed in front were often killed from behind ; even the horses, maddened by the fury of the battle, rushed wildly, neighing through the battle, tearing with their teeth, trampling on the fallen whether dead or alive, their feet and legs besmeared with blood.

Histories and chronicles of the time agree in stating that had not the Neapolitans lost courage by the unexpected entrance of the enemy into the city, and the fear that the Saracens would turn their weapons against Manfred, they would have been the conquerors ; but disheartened just at the moment when they most needed courage, decimated by the fierce valor of the French constantly reinforced by fresh troops, they began to yield. They only made a stand in the street where Manfred fought ; finally even here, assailed from all the surrounding streets which had fallen into the power of the enemy, they turned their backs, crying : "*Sauve qui peut.*"

Then commenced a most miserable slaughter. The

enemy pressed after them with the fury of wild beasts ; they killed whomsoever they met, whether resisting or not ; they spared neither age nor sex. We have not the heart to narrate the excesses committed during that night by the French army, although we know that the greater part of the history of men is composed of such deeds. It is enough to state that both by fire and by sword the dead amounted to over ten thousand.

Manfred, carried along with the flight of his soldiers, convinced that the voice of fear had become more powerful than his, desiring of dying with wounds on his breast, made a last effort to rally, and turned his horse towards the enemy. He would have met what he sought for, because, conspicuous by the silver eagle which he wore for a crest on his helmet, all the enemy's swords would have been turned against him, had not a fresh troop, whom he had not seen before, issuing forth from a street that led to the gate of Abbruzzo, surrounded him with the cry : "*Swabia ! Swabia !*" A knight of gigantic stature, wearing a wolf for a crest, approached him, leaping his horse through the crowd ; and bending over the saddle, said to him in haste : "Glorious king, the city is taken, the Provençal victorious. If we had arrived sooner, we would have made you conquer ; now we can do nothing but save you. You know us not, but we are your friends."

The hour has not yet arrived, thought Manfred ; then he replied to the knight, "Great thanks, baron, since you have come, I accept you ; we may yet arrest the fortune of Charles at Benevento."

"And if it please God, reverse it !" added the unknown. Then, raising his voice, which resounded above the din of war around it, he ordered his men to put their lances in rest, and advance in close phalanx. That battalion of iron marched forward, cutting its way against all opposition, and slowly advancing, like a heavy chariot, approached the gate of Abbruzzo, still known as St. John's gate.

"My children ! the queen !" exclaimed Manfred, suddenly ; and without saying a word to the knight that rode

beside him, turned his horse in the direction they had come.

"His children!" was heard at the same time a voice exclaiming from the middle of the squadron, "let us save them."

Now let it not be irksome to our gentle reader that we, using a privilege common to all novel writers, should turn a step backwards, for we have something to relate respecting Queen Elena and her children.

Corrado di Pierleone Benincasa, master of the defence of the royal palace of San Germano, learning that the city had been taken by assault, wondered in not seeing Manfred and his followers come to its rescue. Fearing, therefore, that he might have been killed, he collected hastily all the knights that had remained on guard in the palace, and spoke thus: "Any one among you who desires to save his life with shame, let him immediately depart, and take refuge wherever his heart dictates; whoever, though, desires to remain faithful to his king, let him know that there is nothing left us but an honorable death."

They all replied that they desired to remain faithful to Manfred; that they feared not death, but dishonor. Corrado, deeply moved, exclaimed: "May Heaven protect your valor and loyalty!" Then he strengthened the gates, distributed the soldiers, and recommended himself to Divine Providence, trusting in its aid. Having fulfilled all the duties of a wise captain under the circumstances, he directed his steps to the queen's apartment. The faithful baron wavered in ascending the steps, he wept, and joining his hands, from time to time would sigh: "O noble house of Manfred, how low fallen!" To the maidens and servants who came in his way, and anxiously asked: "What news, Sir Corrado?" he would reply, "Recommend yourselves to God," and went on. Reaching the queen's rooms, he stopped a moment, brushed away his tears with the back of his hand, and knocked softly. Gismonda opened to him. Corrado entered, assuming a bold expression; but when he perceived his king's family, unable to restrain himself, he broke forth

in tears, and kneeled at the foot of the bed, where lay the queen.

"What means this, great chancellor?" asked the noble Elena.

"My queen, the town is taken . . ."

"Taken!—and Manfred?" Corrado did not reply.

"Glorious Virgin! Is he dead, perhaps?"

"Dead!" cried with one voice Yole and Manfredino.

"I know not whether he be dead or alive, . . . but he is dead for us, for he does not come to our rescue."

"He might have abandoned the ten to save the hundred. Is there any escape, chancellor?"

"None. Now, what shall we do?"

"Gismonda," spoke the queen, with an altered voice, "bring me my royal mantle and my crown."

These were brought to her; she wrapped herself in the first, placed the other on her head, descended from the bed, and sat in a throne-like seat, with a child on each side; then said to Corrado: "See, Corrado, what is left us to do—to die like a queen; had we been a knight we should not have asked any one what we had to do."

"Noble queen, speak not thus. I have provided for myself and my followers, according to the rules of honor. I only came to ask whether you knew any secret way that led out of the palace, to put you in safety, so that while we should be defending the gate of the palace, you and your children might escape the fury of the enemy."

"We know no other means of safety, and even if we knew it, it should have been a means of safety for all or for none."

"Magnanimous being! Farewell, my sweet lady; be assured that the French will never reach you except through here;" and he touched his breast. "May it please you to allow me to kiss for the last time your royal hand, and assure me of your grace if ever I did aught that might have displeased your royal highness. As for the rest, remember me in your prayers."

He took up Manfredino in his arms, kissed him on his forehead, and restoring him to his mother's arms, prayed fervently: "O Lord Jesus, who was crucified for us, grant

that Thy servant might save this innocent boy !—Listen ! listen ! the assault has already begun. I must hence—*Swabia ! Swabia !* my knights !” he cried, running towards the door, where arriving he turned towards the queen, repeating the prayer : “ Recommend me to God.”

The assault on the palace had lasted now more than an hour ; but although the Apulian barons held on with admirable constancy, it was clear that they could not last much longer, when of a sudden the enemy’s blows began to slacken, and presently to cease entirely ; soon they heard the enemy scatter in flight, and a few minutes after resounding the joyful cry of “ Long live Manfred !”

“ Open to the king !” cried hundreds of voices ; and those on the inside, having recognized the silver eagle, opened the door. Manfred entered, accompanied by a few knights ; the remaining ones stopped around the gate. He advanced anxiously, traversed the court-yard, and arrived at the staircase ; it was dark. On placing his foot on the first step it stumbled on a body ; a deep groan and painful lament arose from it. They brought torches, and he recognized in the dying man the faithful Benincasa, who, mortally wounded by an arrow in his breast, had dragged himself to die tranquilly at his post.

“ Corrado, do you recognize me ?” Manfred asked him pitifully.

“ Ah ! indeed I do, . . .” replied the dying baron, raising his heavy eyes ; “ you lose the most faithful ; . . . and I . . . I die happy in having saved your family . . .”

“ No, you will live, Corrado !” broke forth Manfred, and leaned towards him ; . . . but he had breathed his last. A tear fell from the eye of the king upon the face of the dead ; but time pressed, and he rushed on in deep sobs.

On the morning after the Provençal had become master of San Germano, the brutal rabble, in order to please the new master, put a rope around the neck of the faithful Benincasa, and dragged him ignominiously through the streets of the city. Time, however, true dispenser of justice, has rendered the verdict whether in that moment the disgraced one was Corrado Benincasa, or the Count of Provence, who, having the power, did not prevent it. I

have sure faith that the avenging angel noted that deed, and that even from that hour Charles d'Anjou rendered himself deserving of the divine ire that so bitterly punished him in the Sicilian Vespers.

The family of King Manfred heard hasty steps approaching their room ; heard the pressure on the door fastenings. Manfredino hid himself behind his mother's mantle ; Gismonda uttered a cry ; the queen rose, and Yole came near to support her.

"There is no need of it, . . ." said the queen, removing from her daughter's arms, and stood in a dignified attitude.

The folding doors fly open. . . . "Blessed Virgin ! Manfred !" The king utters not a word, runs towards the queen, puts his sword between his teeth, and lifting his wife on his right arm, his son on his left, carries them out of the room.

A knight of splendid form, although armed *cap-à-pie*, approaches Yole and offers his hand ; the modest maiden blushes, and refuses timidly. The knight approaches near and whispers a word. What has he said to her ? Has he perhaps charmed her by magic ? . . . I know not ; but she rushes to his embrace, as if forgetful of her station, forgetful of her decorum. He lifts her up in his arms, and follows Manfred. Whatever was the impulse that agitated Yole in that first moment, it was not sufficient to efface the natural delicacy for which she was famous above all the maidens of Italy. Hardly had they reached the threshold of the room, than she cried, "Where is Gismonda ?"

"Here I am !" replied the maiden, who, escorted by another knight, walked beside her ; "I am following you, my lady."—Yole smiled to her encouragingly.

In descending the stairs, the knight, whose crest was a wolf, perceiving the king burdened in carrying both the queen and his boy, spoke thus : "Monseigneur, you cannot go on so."

"And what am I to do ?"

"Give me the boy."

"My son! you want my son? If I should give him to you, will you restore him safe to my arms?"

"I hope so, . . . or at least he will not die before me."

"Take him, then!" And he handed the boy to him. The robust knight raised him in his arms, and as the boy, in leaving his father's arms, bewailed, he chided him, saying, "Children of kings should not cry." Then Manfredino was silent, and the knight, sitting him on his left arm, said: "Hold close to my neck;" which having been done, he covered him with his enormous shield, so that he could not have been hit in any part. "Now you may sleep there, for you are safe," he added, and rushed down the steps, from where he had had the body of poor Benincasa removed, not to sadden the eyes of the royal family.

They issued into the open air. The enemy had disappeared. They heard from afar a clashing of swords, a confused crying of "*Swabia! Monjoy!*" They wondered, nor could imagine what it could be; they took advantage of the propitious occasion, and mounting their horses, lifting the ladies in front of their saddles, spurred towards the gate of Saint John. Without meeting any adventures worth noting, they reached the walls, went out of the gate, and galloped towards the open country, crying often with cheerful voices, "The king is safe."

Manfred, often recurring in his mind to the events of that memorable night, would exclaim, both with pleasure and regret: "Even misfortune is good for something; had it not been for that, I should never have known these faithful ones who surround me."

Shall I turn back to contemplate for the last time the conquered city? I will, for the angel has not forbidden me under penalty of being changed into a statue of salt. Behold, it burns like Gomorrah; the one guilty of rebellion to God, the other guilty of rebellion to its king. I say both guilty, for otherwise I could not understand why the same punishment should have fallen upon them. A few hours of fire burns works over which human industry has labored for many years! The palace of the baron and the hut of the poor now fall together in the universal destruction; the citizens, whether partisans of

Manfred or Charles, robbed; their houses plundered, those resisting, killed; the weak, mocked. Indeed, the Count of Provence had assured all who would give credence to his assurances, that he had come to release the Apulians from the Swabian oppression, and called himself a liberator. Nor were sacred persons and property better protected:—clergymen, venerable for holiness of life, for age and learning, cruelly maltreated by the savage soldiery; the devout offerings of the faithful before the images of saints, stolen if of gold, let alone if of wax; even the images and statues of saints, broken and shared if of precious metal, let alone if painted or of wood. What more?—the mind recoils at the sad recital; the sacred oil scattered to the ground, or used to anoint their beards; the eucharistic bread scattered about, and the golden vases and *chalices* containing it seized, to be gambled off at dice, or to drink out of them. Yet the Count of Provence swore that he had come to restore religion in the kingdom of a heretic, and called himself the first-born of the Church!

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SORROWFUL NIGHT.

Un angioletto con le man di rose
Chiuse gli occhi infelici in tanta angoscia.

SAN BENEDETTO.

A little cherub, with its hands of rose,
Closed her unhappy eyes on all her woes.

M. G. M.



AD is the kingdom of darkness—sad as the thoughts of a fugitive king. As it happens sometimes to the decrepid old man to recall the days of his youth—for there is no age without its joys—and his blood would flow warmer, his pulses

beat faster, his face become red with a crimson flush ; when of a sudden, being on the brink of the sepulchre, the image of death would assail him stronger than ever, and freeze all his hopes ; likewise the spirit of Manfred, though looking back to some of the past events of that memorable night, derived comfort from them ; yet soon after, the weight of the present misfortune and the fear of the future discouraged him. The fates had deprived him even of the flattery of hope ! He rode silently ; he might have shown himself cheerful, even narrate the pleasant legend, for he was capable of dissimulating above any other man in his times ; much resembling in this the land of his kingdom, that bewitches the looker-on with the treasures of creation, at the same time that the volcano is preparing ruin for it in its bowels ; yet, knowing that it would avail him nothing to pretend cheerfulness, and even if it had, no one would have believed him, he abandoned himself to the sadness of his thoughts. His followers, convinced that if there was any way of safety, Manfred would have found it before them—for misfortune never cowed him down, and he was a man to do by himself—also rode on silently. Without resting a moment, they arrived at San Pietro in Fine, a town eight miles distant from San Germano. They wanted to stop there, but the place did not seem safe enough ; they resolved to continue their flight. The horses, although tired, justified the trust that the knights had placed in their mettle.

“Are you suffering?” asked Manfred of the noble Elena, who, chilled by the sharp wind, aching from having remained a long time in the same position, and weak from the nervous debility that had for so long afflicted her, had unconsciously sighed.

“I ? Think only of saving yourself, think of saving my children.”

“You do suffer,” insisted Manfred.

“Oh, mind it not ! Perhaps this suffering of mine will be accepted as part of the expiation !”

“No, no ; white is white, nor does the tare change the nature of the wheat ; every soul is for itself. In the

valley of Jehoshaphat every living being will answer for his own sins. You ought not to suffer on my account."

Now they had reached the foot of the mountain Cesima, on the summit of which even to this day we perceive the town of Presenzano. Manfred ordered that they should leave the beaten road, and, turning to the right, get into the pine woods that shade all its declivity, for he intended to halt there.

The order was cheerfully obeyed, for the precipitate flight and shrewdly biting air of the night had subdued even the bravest. They went perhaps a hundred steps into the woods, and there they stopped. In less than no time there arose a cheerful fire to unstiffen their limbs. Manfred turned around and saw Elena at his side, and Yole at the side of Elena. . . . Manfredino was wanting; but, turning his head, saw the knight, who handed him to him safe and sound. The king took him in his arms; the boy smiled, and raising his hands caressed his face. The father's looks softened at the lovely act, and bending affectionately, he kissed him on the forehead.

"We then have lost nothing?" exclaimed Manfred, after looking again and again on his family.

"We have lost Benincasa," replied Yole, with a soft voice.

"In truth, my daughter, you have spoken a wise word."

"Certainly," added the knight, entering into the conversation; "it is not to be denied that it would have been better for all of us if the grand chancellor had lived; yet he deserves not so much compassion. If he has lost his life, he has acquired fame, which in substance is the life of the brave, for they live for it; and if to obtain it they die, their death should be esteemed fortunate and happy. Perhaps the perverse world, accustomed more to remember deeds that sadden it, rather than those that honor it, will not preserve the fame of this valorous knight except among a few; but those few will be those who do not measure virtue by success, and in whatever part of the world, in whatever time they meet the fame of a brave man, they will hail it as a saint, and will raise an altar to it in their hearts. The others, whose existence is only

shown by the appetite for food, are not of any account. I have always begged God in my prayers for two things—to deliver me from the praises of the imbecile, and from the contempt of the brave.”

“Well said,” said Manfred approvingly; “so it is. Rarely does one meet a brave man joined to a wicked mind. Knight, in courtesy, I beg a favor of you.”

“You have only to command, monseigneur; speak.”

“I beg of you to reveal to me who you are.”

“You do me an honor, monseigneur, to interest yourself in a person of small condition, such as I am! However, my face is not one that loves to be concealed, nor my brow one that would turn pale at the sight of the brave. Behold, look me in the face; be it good or bad, it is what nature has given me.”

He raised his visor, and the king saw one of those heads which the heavens granted to the Italians, when with the head they used to grant also the faculty of blushing; yet he did not remember ever having seen it, and he was about asking his name, when the knight added: “You do not know me by sight, nor do I know you, although I have always been an admirer of your valor and virtue. You see in me, monseigneur, a citizen, who banished from his city, carries its arms for a crest” (and he pointed to the wolf),* “in order that it may see the deeds performed by the son it has expelled, and grieve that these are not done in its behalf or in its renown. You see in me a man who, persecuted by men, avenges himself by pitying them, and rendering them good for evil. In fine, I am Ghino di Tacco da Torrita . . .”

“You Sir Ghino!” repeated the king with surprise; and all the Apulians that were there pressed around to look upon that man who had raised himself to such a fame as to compete with the most illustrious captains of armies. Ghino stood immovable in a warrior-like pose, not with ostentatious artificial stiffness, but a pose acquired by his body through long habit. Manfred, after looking at him long, added, moved: “O noble blood,

* The arms of the city of Siena.

how low reduced ! Great soul, to what state reduced ! how have you borne life ? how have you saved it from death ? from infamy ? ”

“ O my king, I have overrun this land, that hides her present shame with the ancient glories, and found it full of crimes ; my arm has protected innocence, and people have blessed me ;—and since eternal is the war that injustice wages against innocence, I have rested but few moments.”

“ And in those moments ? ”

Ghino lowered his looks, and hesitatingly added :

“ People say that the ancient division of things must return ;—man has a right to existence. I have asked bread, and have taken it from those who have denied it to me.”

“ But why did you not come to our court ? Where is the knight who has not found a protection against the scourge of fortune under the wings of the eagle of Manfred ? Feared you that we should have shown ourselves less courteous to you than to others ! Ghino, you have wronged us.”

“ No, monseigneur, never have I doubted your courtesy. I doubted rather that it would have been a presumption in me to claim it. The reputation of Ghino is very contradictory. Those who have brought me to this state, in order to justify their crime before the world, and perhaps to subdue the cry of their own conscience, proclaim with loud outcries that I am a fugitive from the gallows, a dangerous robber ;—indeed, the innocent saved from the cruelty of the oppressor, the women protected, the castle secured from the avarice of the powerful neighbor, do not say so. Nevertheless, evil howls louder than good, and my present condition speaks against me. Would it have been generous in me to invoke your light in order to illuminate the darkness that human perverseness had drawn over my head ? In the meanwhile I strove to do noble works, and often my lips would say : men will in the end cease to be unjust, though my spirit did not hope for it ; and when they will restore to me the good name which they have stolen from me, then, I thought, I will repair to the court of Manfred. It was perhaps pride, it

was perhaps veneration for your Serene Highness ;—at any rate I believe then, and believe still, that not every Ghibelline is of service to the son of Frederick.”

“ You are right, noble baron, in your opinion that not every man that hates Rome is worthy to love Manfred ; yet you were mistaken when you thought that we had not the heart and the mind to distinguish you among the thousand that cry ‘ our party ! our party ! ’ to be above the law.* It is a long time since we have desired to know you personally, and now we thank fortune that before ending our days it has reserved us this pleasure.”

“ Noble king, fame has related wonders of your knightly courtesy, but the reality far surpasses the report of it.”

“ And if Heaven grants that this may not be the last of the Swabian kingdom of Apulia, you will never depart from our side. We will appoint you *Condottiero* of some of our troops, and give you an honorable and safe residence in our kingdom. Our court had the reputation through Christendom of being the first in the glory of its troubadours ; now, with Ghino di Tacco, it will acquire also that of being the first in the glory of arms. If misfortune has realized so much for us, we shall never again beg for fortune. And now that we think of it, this same night we noticed among your people, Sir Ghino, a knight who has rendered us valuable services, who killed a traitor at Benevento—yes, certainly it was he. Yole, where is the knight who carried you on his horse ? ”

Yole bent her face, perhaps to hide its blushes, and replied : “ He is gone.”

“ If the knight desires to remain unknown, it would be discourtesy in us to insist upon knowing him, nevertheless, let him have our thanks, and we beg you, Sir Ghino, to convey them to him ; and tell him also that, if reward of honors and estates can in part compensate the

* Alluding to the great number of *Condottieri*, soldiers of fortune and feudal barons, who in those disordered times pretended to follow the Ghibelline or Guelph party, but in reality acting for their private interests, and tyrannizing both in the cities and territories where they had their estates.

great debt we owe him, the desire of Manfred will be to show himself grateful."

They would have kept talking till morning, so charmed were each of the other, if at that moment the queen, leaning heavily on Manfred's arm, had not reminded him that they had dismounted there to rest ; hence he took off his mantle, and spreading it on the ground near the fire, pointed it out with a sad smile to Queen Elena, saying : " Lie here, my queen ; oh ! the day when you came a bride to my royal bed, you would not have thought, unhappy one, that you would have to pass a night of pain upon the bare ground. Who would have told you ? It seemed then that your life would have been a serene sky ; and if among so many happy thoughts there flashed the image of the last solemn hour, certainly you must have imagined it as brilliant as the setting sun in a summer day."

" My sweet husband, joy and sorrow comes from the Lord ; blessed be He in His holy will . . . "

" Suffering is the virtue of the beast of burden ; yet it would have been a blessing to have granted me either fewer sorrows, or more patience to bear them : but you, my queen, teach me how you are able to suffer, without protesting ? "

" Bear in mind that Divine dispensation is just ; it is merciful if it makes you happy, vastly more merciful if it makes you to suffer ; the sufferings that you will have endured will be so much on the way to paradise, every grief a step bringing you nearer to the beginning of all perfections. "

" Rest, my good Elena ; I am convinced that it is too late for me to learn such doctrines. Grief obscures my faith, at least within my spirit. When the times become quieter, I purpose to call a learned priest. . . . Why do you smile, Sir Ghino ? Do you suppose there is no such person as a wise priest ? Our kingdom, now that the times are against them, numbers over five thousand priests ; shall there not be one learned and wise among five thousand ? Yes, in truth I will consult with him, and discuss about this theology. "

Manfred had misinterpreted the smile of Sir Ghino, in order to hit sarcastically those whom he called his enemies. Ghino did not reply, but taking his cloak from his shoulders, folded it up, and bending towards where the queen was about to lie, said :

"Noble queen, rough is this cloth, nor suitable to your delicate limbs ; nevertheless if you deign to rest upon it, I assure you by the faith in Christ that it belongs to an honorable knight."

"Many thanks, knight," added Elena, with delicate grace ; "no one in the world would deny that, resting on the mantle of Manfred, and on that of noble Ghino, I had not lain in the bed of chivalry. Nevertheless I beg you to keep it ; the night bites shrewdly, the air is very cold, and you may have need of it."

"Oh ! indeed," answered Ghino, shaking his head, "it will not be the first time that I have learned to do without it. O, my noble lady, since I knew that my enemies had burned the castle of my fathers, I have had no other bed but the earth, and often no other covering but the sky ; the sky would be cloudy, and the thunderbolt often broke my sleep, and I, starting, have seen its last flash lightening through the clouds ; and my face was glazed with frost, my hair hung with icicles, and terror pressed my brain, for vengeance was far from me. Now the sky is bright, the vengeance accomplished, the fire near, so if you have no other reason for refusing it, behold, I have spread it for you."

So saying he laid it on the ground, and then, courteously saluting the royal family, retired, saying : "May you rest in a better bed to-morrow !"

"We hope so !" replied Manfred, and the queen, "God's will be done."

Ghino, retiring to some distance from the royal family, unloosened his helmet, and hung it to a branch of a pine ; he leaned his spear against the trunk, then lay on the ground ; his bare head rested on his shield, his sword between his legs, then leaning his cheek on his right hand, in a few moments he was asleep. So did they all ; only Manfred, who lay across the borders of the mantles

where his family slept, with his face turned towards the fire, his hand supporting his head, remained watching the different aspects of a burning log. It appeared first sparkling with a beautiful golden light; by degrees exhausting the moisture, it turned red; later, the need of it increasing, blue and green; of a sudden, it reappeared radiant with gold, because all things before their extinction revive in a spark of life; finally it went out; then there arose from it a dense smoke at first, then less thick, later of an ashy color, then pale white; finally it also vanished;—only a sad handful of ashes had remained of that brilliant object, delight of the eyes. Why did Manfred watch intently a circumstance that passes unobserved a hundred times in our life? Oh! misfortune is an acute observer!—and the reason why, he whispered in the following words: “It is gone—even fame is a smoke; eternity and oblivion swallow virtues and crimes; but at least, from that log there remained the ashes; what remains of us?”—Sleep weighed on his eyelids. At first, now he closed them, now he strove to reopen them, as if anxious to contend against its power. But who can fight against it? Manfred succumbed, as a man deprived of his senses, dropping like a corpse.

Who is the bold one that dares to come near the sleeping royal family? Is it hate or love that guides his steps? Cautiously, noiselessly, a knight approaches them, points the butt of his spear on the ground, leans heavily upon it, and stands gazing.—Oh! beautifully beams the face of beauty, when the happy dream caresses it with the tips of the feathers of its wings; beautifully, when hope hovers around it as a perfumed atmosphere; beautifully, when its lips tremble with the trepidation of joy;—in that moment, poets fancy its hair blown by the breath of the Graces, in order that, at each undulation, they may appear in a new and more bewitching form; and imagine invisible sylphs floating through the air, singing secret harmonies, which human ears cannot distinguish, but that, sweetly penetrating into the soul, charm it with ineffable delight. Other and more lovely fancies they imagine; yet there is no poetry that can describe the emotions that

the sleeping beauty arouses. When in the silent midsummer night, the firmament, serene as the innocent soul, shrouds the earth with its pure and transparent azure as with a canopy of glory, and myriads of celestial bodies exalt in the joy of their light the magnificence of the creator, then only, the inspired poet might find an image worthy to compare with the face of the sleeping maiden beauty : which of these two spectacles contains more charms, he neither knows nor can tell to himself ; they are both divine works, both emanations of the loving thought of God ; our soul can only silently, adoringly, rejoice in the ecstasy of its sensations.

Either Yole's mind could not withstand, unused as it was to it, even a dream of happiness, or that it really was too intense for her to bear ; she suddenly awoke, pronouncing the word "Rogiero."

Rogiero, leaning on his lance, stood before her. She started, and rushing to him said smilingly : "Why did you fly from us ? The king has asked for the saviour of his daughter."

"Oh ! if he knew that I was he who went as far as the banks of the river Oglio to hasten against him those enemies that now invest his kingdom, if he knew that I am a condemned man, certainly he would not have asked for me."

"You did so being deceived, nor would your worst enemy consider you unworthy of pity, and pardon : but you spontaneously fought for his honor at Benevento ; you, risking your life, warned him against his traitors ; you saved him and his family at San Germano. The heart of the king is magnanimous."

"To what purpose discover myself ? I expect no rewards of money or possessions. The reward which I desire, the son of Frederick will never grant to me ; let me then die unknown."

"Ah, you will not die !"

"Why should I live ? Who would not prefer an honorable death to a life of misery ? Have I not borne existence long enough ? I will not renew my ancient complaints, but I swear to you by the love I bear you, that

on the field of Benevento I will use all efforts to die as a soldier."

"And if you should die, think you that I would consent to remain alone in this desert of grief?"

"Have I asked you to do so? No, Yole, no; Heaven has destined us to premature end. . . . I abhor the nonsense of soothsayers, yet they foresaw this end for me. . . . Die then, unhappy maiden, for death alone can give you rest; . . . and if you promise, that in the hour when your sad parents surround your dying bed, and would easily consent to any request of yours, if you promise to ask them, in token of their love, to allow you to be buried in my tomb, near my bones. . . . Oh! too sad a request is this which I ask of you, Yole, yet the only one that I hope to assuage the bitterness of my last days."

"I have thought of this."

"The same angel, then, guards our souls, and inspires the same thoughts. . . . Then, when opening the tomb, where the pity of my brothers-in-arms shall have placed me, they will lower you down to sleep at my side; certainly my arms will stretch towards you. It will be the cold embrace of death, but it will last through eternity. . . ."

"Through eternity! And tell me, will I feel it?—will you feel it?"

"I have asked the sepulchres, and they have only replied by silence and darkness."

"And the second life?—The desired. . . ."

"Hope.—Divine justice must have punished the assassins who murdered my mother; . . . and hence I sincerely believe in a reward for those who suffer. . . ."

"Your mother murdered! Oh! you never spoke to me of your mother, speak . . . speak to me of your mother. . . ."

"Did I speak of my mother? Hush! . . . Say no more; . . . we may yet live; . . . then I will tell you all about her. . . . Who knows but at this moment she prays for our peace, looks at us from above, perhaps weeps for us, if the immortals weep! . . . you will know her in heaven. . . . Now add not another word; . . . it would

sadden you if I should relate that mystery of crime and perfidy. I almost despise myself for having, ah! too bitterly, known it."

"I will be silent, I will rejoice even, if you wish me to, in the secret desire of meeting her in the abode of the just. I have often listened to the rewards to come, to the life without end, to the joys that are never embittered by grief, to peaceful thrones above the clouds and storms, and I have full faith in the paradise to come . . ."

"Keep it as a treasure . . . it will comfort you . . ."

"If it was not so, I should despair. Once happy there we will pray for peace for those we leave behind—for my best of mothers . . ."

"For your generous father . . ." And saying this, Rogiero turned his eyes toward the place where lay Manfred.—Holy Mary!—The king sitting, and supporting himself with his left hand fixed on the ground, and the other holding his right knee, with his face raised, was listening to them. Rogiero moved as if to fly; Yole leaned against a tree.

"Stop, Rogiero," spoke the king; "you fly in vain; come here, give me your hand so that I may rise."

Rogiero obeyed. Manfred continued: "You love? and it seems happiness to you? Look," and he pointed out to him his royal family, stretched on the ground, "these are the joys of love."

"Oh! if I only had them . . ." replied Rogiero.

"You might rue the day when they called you father.—But it is useless to warn, for we were condemned from the beginning to this painful experience. . . . Do you wish that I should utter a fierce imprecation on your head? . . . Well, may you obtain these joys of love . . . but from whom? You have raised your look to the daughter of the king; my daughter is of the blood of Emperors; speak, what is yours, Rogiero?"

"Mine? I know not."

"Was no one present at your birth? Did no one nourish you? no one educate you? More than any other animal, the infant left to itself, dies."

"My mother was murdered at the moment she gave

me birth ; crime brought me to the world before my time ; . . . the assassin was my nurse Oh ! in pity sake, my beloved king, leave the history of my life in the obscurity of sin ; even I know only bloody fragments of it ; yet I know enough of it to be able to swear to you that my descent would not contaminate the rank you granted me at Benevento."

"And what was the name of your mother?"

"My king, you shall know it, when it will be a glory for me to recall it."

"You first betrayed me, then you fought against my traitors ; why was it easier for you to commit the fault than to amend it?"

"I saw your brother."

"Which brother?"

"Henry *the Cripple*, and Caserta showed him to me . . ."

"Where did you see him? Is he alive?"

"He died in my arms, broken down with sufferings, deprived of intellect, a miserable monument of persecution and pity. They told me that I was his son, and he also recognized me ; they swore that you had been his executioner, and he also confirmed it. Perhaps for many years they had taught him to believe so, and I . . ."

"And you rushed to avenge him ; and you did well, in the desire, not in the means. Had you not a poniard at your side? Why did you go as far as Cremona to call upon the stranger for your revenge?"

"Does passion ever reason? If I had had any control over my actions, would they have been able to deceive me so basely? Whenever my mind undertook to meditate upon my misfortunes, a voice that seemed to have come from heaven, upbraided me, saying: '*Remember your father.*'—Oh! I am more unfortunate than guilty. In the Abbey of St. Victor, in the Roman Campania, an ancient vassal of my family, the murderer of my mother, revealed to me the fraud . . ."

"Why did they incite you against me? Why did they pervert the heart of my faithful squire? intrust my ruin to the arm that defended me? Are there not traitors

enough on this earth? This is a wonderful mystery, and I am not able to penetrate it. And what did you do then?"

"I wept with grief, and hastened to save my good king. Being arrested at St. Agata dei Goti, they carried me to Benevento, and threw me into a prison, where through a bolted door I heard that they were conspiring against you. Nevertheless I had been condemned to die there of starvation, had not an angel saved me; . . . it was your daughter that . . ."

"And who told you of him?"

"Many are the ways of the Lord, dear father. A spy of Caserta, surprised in the most private rooms of your royal palace, revealed to me the crime . . ."

"Then I came to disclose to you the conspiracy . . ."

"Why did you not tell me the names? to what good all this mystery?"

"My beloved king, although Rinaldo d'Aquino made me a criminal, and many a time has attempted my life, yet he is related to me by blood. Time will explain this mystery. I led that night your sacred person to the place of the conspiracy, because I could think of nothing better to do. I hoped that my loyalty might make you forgive the perfidy of my relative. Heaven willed otherwise. Then I endeavored to spare his shame. I warned him by secret letters to withdraw from the guilty path. Fool! I thought the man capable of repentance. I challenged to death Count Cerra, for he was the most dangerous of the conspirators. Thus I hoped to frighten the rest of them, and warn you, my king, of the danger."

"And have all the traitors deserted?"

"All, at least all those I knew, have taken refuge with Caserta in the castles of the frontier."

"You have done the good of your own will, the bad at the instigation of others; you have run many dangers for our sake. You deserve a reward, and you shall have it."

"O my noble lord, I desire nothing more than to die for you. Keep your reward for others who make it the object of their works. I would desire only one reward,

and this I know to be too high for me, and therefore dare not ask it. It is now many years since I loved Yole with the love of the saints ; it was for her that I conquered at the tournament of your coronation, for her that I became brave, for her that I became knightly ; every act, every thought, has been that I may be acceptable to her. I cannot now tear her image from my heart, nor can she mine. We love with a desperate love, nor wish to be united but in the grave."

"No, be it in life ; you have saved her, she is yours. Beware of what you are doing before accepting her," said Manfred, smiling ; "beware, it is a sorry gift which I make to you."

"Whatever lot befalls me, it will ever be a heaven in the arms of Yole."

"In truth, no one can escape his destiny. Give me your hand, Rogiero, and you yours, Yole." Thus saying, Manfred had taken the hands of the young couple in his, and drew them together. The waning flame shifting continually over the burnt embers, sent forth a wavering blue light, such as superstition believes the light of a lamp becomes when the ghost of the dead passes near it. The tips of the fingers already touch each other ; the hands almost clasp ; when the flame, suddenly blazing, illuminated the face of Rogiero. We have said it, that face inspired sadness ; time had stamped on the forehead of that unhappy one the few years that had passed. It must have been very handsome once, but now it was pale, attenuated. Manfred saw, or it seemed to him that he saw, in that face the living image of one dead, whom he never recalled to mind without a sigh ; and if the memory of her surprised him in the middle of the gay song, the notes would expire upon his lips, and the hand wander unconscious of what it was doing. He violently parted the two, and keeping them distant from each other as far as his arms could reach, he exclaimed : "I swear to you by all the saints in Heaven, you can never be man and wife !"

A cry of terror broke forth from the lovers, and both eagerly pressed upon him to ask the reason why ; when they were disturbed by an approaching tramping of

horses, and a great light coming from the main road, that surrounded the wood."

"We are pursued!" exclaimed Manfred, and in an attitude of desperate defence, placed himself in front of his family.

"We are pursued!" exclaimed Rogiero, and covering Yole with his body, touched Ghino, who was fast asleep, with the butt of his lance. He started up at a jump, unsheathing his sword in the act, asking: "What is it?"

"Ghino? the enemy . . ." says Rogiero.

"Where are they?"

"There, on the road."

"I see nothing but lights there. St. Ambrosius! lights are not enemies, they might even be friends; I will go to reconnoitre." He detached his helmet from the pine, and fastening it on his head, took his spear, and started out of the wood.

"You will not go alone," said Manfred, "I will go with you."

"Welcome, my king."

"Nor will I remain," said Rogiero; "are we not brothers-in-arms, Sir Ghino?"

"Welcome to you also. Let us go with the aid of the saints. Go softly lest the boy awake and get frightened," said he, passing near Manfredino, and walked some distance on tiptoe. The others did the same; and Manfred repressed even a sigh that came from the depth of his heart.

They reached the last trees of the forest, and perceived a large squadron of Saracens, who, carrying lighted pine branches, caused a light. Looking more attentively, they recognized the Emir Jussuff, and Count Giordano d'Angalone, who, mounted on war horses, advanced slowly, without exchanging a word. Arriving near where Manfred was hidden, the Emir, turning to Giordano, asked: "My lord count, observe the ground, if you please, and tell me whether you think it smooth enough for a fight."

"Jussuff, it seemed prepared for the purpose; nevertheless, I beg you to wait till daylight."

"Did I wait to commit the crime? why should I wait to amend it? O good Manfred, where could your faithful servant rejoin you?"

"Let it be done as you will; certainly death will not be so bitter to me as the fact that by my fault Manfred has lost San Germano, and perhaps even the kingdom."

"May God avert it, Count Giordano."

"And tell me, Emir, know you whether the royal family is safe?"

"Yes, you can die with this assurance."

"Emir, listen to me: neither you nor I know upon whose sword death now rests. Not to threaten you, mark, but might not you be the one killed?"

"I will endeavor not to be, yet I might."

"And in such case who will lead this squadron, which is almost intact, and might be of so much help in the present strait to Manfred? If you desire to aid him while alive, you would not want to injure him if dead."

"You speak the words of the wise, Count Giordano: would to Heaven that you had always spoken so! Omar, Hussein, Soraka!" he called, turning to his squadron. The ones named came out of the ranks, and he ordered them: "By the faith which binds you to me, your Emir, I command you that, should this knight kill me, you will obey him until he will have led you to Manfred, as if he were my son. . . . Oh, my son! recommend him to Zuleika, and tell her to be a good mother to him, Soraka; and tell her also on my part to take good care of Zekin, the dog of my love, and divide her bread with Borak, the companion of my battles, until it may please the Prophet to call him to another life. . . . Poor Borak!" he added, patting the horse on his neck, "there will be no place for you in paradise; it is written, seven alone will be the animals that will enter there above; . . . truly you are handsomer than the ass of Haazy, and the ox of Said Musa, even if they were as white as frost. . . . Oh, poor Borak! I will not meet you in paradise; you are disinherited." After caressing him a while longer, drawing the rein, he leaped towards Count Giordano, saying: "Count, my will is finished; have you any dispositions to make?"

"Nothing, except you tell Manfred that my last sigh, next to God, was to him."

"Then we may begin." Each drew their swords, and measuring their distance, rushed precipitously upon each other.

"Lower your swords!—the king is at hand."

This cry came from the manly breast of Ghino, whilst the two knights were about falling on each other; who, wondering, turned around, and saw Manfred hastening towards them. They dismounted from their horses, and so did all the surrounding Saracens. Jussuff, approaching Manfred, kneeled down according to the custom of the Orientals, touching the dust with his beard, and grieving with a pitiful voice, said: "Oh! my good lord, make me worthy to be trampled upon by you; my soul has fallen so low that it envies the death of the venomous insect!"

On the other side Count Giordano, in a humble attitude, took Manfred's hand, and raising it to his lips, kissed it, sighing: "O my good king!"

"I have betrayed you," continued Jussuff, "as Iscariot betrayed the Son of Mary; nor let the punishment be less terrible."

The chronicle states that in other times Manfred would have fulfilled his threat to Jussuff to tear his heart from his breast, but being in such straits, he had to act not as he desired, but as best he could. He placed his hand upon the Emir's head, and spoke thus: "The arrow, if not shot, will not wound; the bow, if not bent, will not throw; indeed, thou wert the arrow, but the blow did not come from thee. It is written in the book of the law that man cannot change one white hair into black;* indeed, we believe that he cannot pull it out, if destiny does not will it. The influence of the stars had decreed from everlasting time what has now been accomplished. Be then of good cheer: if the fortune of Manfred can

* Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.—MATTHEW V. 36.

be restored, it will be restored; if you think you have offended us, we forgive you."

"Most generous king! May the Great God grant that the flag of your enemies compose the tent that will shelter you from the summer's sun;—may the souls of the prophets exalt you over the head of Charles!"

"We hope so, . . . but from our sword."

"Yes, hope it, for every good work will receive its reward, even on earth, and many such rewards are due you. Now go, let me finish my duel, and then I will place myself at your side, nevermore to leave you.—My faithful men," added he, turning to his Sarācens, "should I die, every enemy that you kill in the king's defence will be the best funeral rites that you could offer to my spirit. Now then, Angalone;" and he raised his scimitar.

"Stop, Emir, thou art doing wrong to the person of thy king!" exclaimed Manfred, interposing.

"Oh! stand back, by the head of your father, Manfred; let me not curse the moment that I have seen the face of my *Melek*."

"Let him do it, my king," begged d'Angalone; "he thirsts for my blood."

"Not for your blood, count, but for my fame!—Jussuff, thou hast lost for us a splendidly fortified town, now thou wouldst lose us our friend. Know that, without chiding thee with the least reproach, we would willingly lose three, ten cities, our kingdom, but not the friend of our youth."

"Nor was I the less a friend to you than Giordano: you wish that infamy should cover me; it will cover my grave, not my life." And, deeply affected, he drew a poniard, and raising his arm as high as he could, was about stabbing himself in the breast. D'Angalone, who stood near him, prevented him, crying to him: "May the prophet guard you, you are committing a sin!"

"Teach me, then, the way not to commit it!"

"We will teach it to you," said Manfred; "once before we begged you to postpone this duel; to postpone does not mean to abandon it; and you can always resume

your quarrel, when we shall have dispersed the enemy that stands before us."

"Willingly would I do it, to please my king; but I know no example of this in the histories taught me by my fathers."

"Indeed, there must be hundreds of such examples! Mollak," called Manfred, "is it not true that in your histories there occur examples of emirs and rajahs that have postponed duels at the desire of their sovereigns?"

The mollaks were in the camps of the Saracens what are in ours the military chaplains, only that they possessed higher attributes—such as being consulted in worldly affairs, sitting the next after the emirs in their councils of war, being reputed wise and learned, and many others not worthy of enumerating. The mollak called seemed a man verging on his sixtieth year; venerable for his snow-white beard, with a red face, very small black eyes, sparkling like two berries; he smiled often, but that smile was imperceptible, except by the trembling of the hair of his upper lip, and as such motion could also be caused by the slightest blowing of the wind, he could thus laugh in people's faces without their ever suspecting it: for the rest, shrewd as a pedler, sharp as a Jew in his purchases, hypocrite a little less than the *politicians* of the nineteenth century. And yet the Saracens reputed him a holy man; and if he had told them that his mule discussed theology with him, they would have believed him; if he had affirmed that he was one of the seven sleepers who slept seven thousand years, seven days, seven hours and a quarter, they would have believed him; if he had threatened them that he would snatch the sun from the firmament, they would all have kneeled at his feet, begging him not to do it, for fear that they should all be reduced to ashes.—Poor infidels! God knows how many such saints they worship in their mosques.—Hearing the summons, he approached, folded his arms on his breast, bowed reverentially, and said, "*The God of mercy vouchsafe wisdom to those who believe and do the things that be right*; may He illumine the steps of your glory, Emir, for many are in the histories the examples that you desire."

"I have never known them."

"That is because you have never studied them. The histories of old narrate that when Roger the Norman took away our dominion of Sicily, one Robert Surlone, his relative, was advancing with a troop of knights, even into the county of Gerami. There governed at that time the praised in the faith of the Prophet, Said Sheik-Ali, father of the beautiful Zuleima. Zuleima was the love of Ibrahim and Rhedi, chief youths in their tribe, of the same age, of the same strength and bravery. They both made their harmonious harps resound through the stillness of the night, they both sang under the window-blinds of the fair Zuleima, and called her their crown of life, pupil of their eyes, and compared themselves to the nightingale enamored of the rose of the valley, and begged the lovely maiden that she would at least look compassionately on the last sigh that they intended to exhale under her balcony. The night that preceded the battle, a pansy flower, which more than any other resembles the heart, fell from it. Each youth wanted it for himself; they fought for it, and if people had not arrived, they would have torn each other with their teeth. Ibrahim broke his harp over the head of Rhedi; they agreed therefore to settle with the sword who should possess the maiden. Said Sheik-Ali ordered them into his house, and called his daughter. There entered the beauty with the gazelle eye, the deer's foot, pink as the pomegranate. All looks, all thoughts, turned to her. They all trembled with pleasure at the sight of the mortal *houri*. 'This maiden,' said the Sheik, pointing to her, 'will never belong to him who kills my friend: the husband of my daughter will be only he who in the next battle will kill my enemy!' And Zuleima disappeared, and with her the light of the youths' eyes.—Near the rock which is now called from Surlone, the next dawn saw two knights hidden. The Normans advanced, preceded by Robert in splendid armor, adorned with gold and red feathers; the two hidden knights rushed upon him. The blood of Surlone has given the name to that rock."

"Which of the two killed him—Ibrahim or Rhedi?"

asked at the same time Jussuff and Ghino, who were listening attentively.

"Both wounded him. Rhedi remained dead on the field. Ibrahim, though all bleeding from many wounds, cut off the head of Robert, and without even waiting to bind up his wounds, ran to lay it at the feet of Zuleima. Here he fell, and his soul ascended to the dwelling of his fathers. By decision of the wise in war, Ibrahim was declared the victor."

"And they did an injustice!" exclaimed Ghino; "for they showed equal courage and equal prowess; an inch of iron that penetrates more or less should not distinguish the brave."

"You have spoken the words of the wise," said Jussuff, looking Ghino in the face, smilingly. "I agree with you . . ."

"And I would speak many others of them, if you were willing to listen. If you are the noble knight you say and for which I hold you, you ought to remit your quarrel to King Manfred; you should prefer the good of all to your own. What do you suppose a malefactor is?—a man who seeks his own good by injuring others. . . . Besides, you sacrifice nothing in postponing the meeting; your mollak affirms it. I also, who have often attended duels everywhere in Italy, swear it to you."

"Do you swear it, noble knight?"

"By my faith," replied Ghino, touching his forehead.

"I would not wish you dishonored, even if your infamy would be my glory."

"I believe you; your face seems that of a wise knight," said the Emir, and with the point of his poniard he pricked the skin of his left hand, and spilled on the ground a few drops of blood. "Preserve, O earth," he implored, "this blood of mine, with my shame; if one day I shall come to ask it of thee, paying in exchange the blood of my offender, then restore it to me pure and uncontaminate. But if I should die without ransoming it, then sprinkle it over my temples, and let it be a witness against me in the day of judgment. Count Giordano

d'Angalone, you are safe from me and mine, we are friends as long as the king has enemies."

"Be it as you will, Jussuff."

"Now let us go to relieve our family," commanded Manfred, "who must still be anxious about us."

The order was obeyed, and there was no more sleep for that night. They rekindled the fires, and sat narrating the events of the day. Manfred sat between Jussuff and d'Angalone. The queen welcomed them, Yole smiled sweetly on them, and they were appeased.

The Emir being asked how he happened to be with Count Giordano, replied: "Know, then, that after the call of the king, who passed under my quarters, I threw myself on the ground, to weep over the past and present misfortune, when I heard a murmur that seemed to arise from the pavement, and whisper in my ears: The Provençals are burning the palace of the king; there is imprisoned your insulter; if he should die, who can heal your dishonor? have you forgotten that the remedy is in the hands of him who struck you? I rose at once, and thought that if I could not fight, my troops could. I ordered them to arm themselves, and led them to the palace. I know not what was the matter with the Provençals; they stood still, as if they feared to advance further. We rushed upon them, dispersed them, entered the prisons, and took out Count Giordano. I told him the reason why I had hastened to save him, he replied to me, weeping, 'Since Manfred had fled on account of the perfidy of his own captains, he would not live to bear his reproaches; he hated life.' I replied to him he was right indeed, but I had not been able to prevent the deed; I could only avenge it, and had already done so. That the heads of the rajahs who commanded the troops that garrisoned the turrets and battlements of the gate Rapido had been buried in a separate ground from their bodies. I gave him a horse and arms, and we left. The Provençals already occupied the palace."

"And did they burn it?" asked Manfred.

"No, they spared it in order that Charles might sleep there."

“O Charles! you already enjoy the satisfaction of resting your limbs in the bed of the conquered; enjoy it; but I call the world to witness whether this has happened through the cowardice of the son of Frederick!”

“Now that Charles has placed his foot within the kingdom, something must be given to him.”

“What is that you say, Emir? Have your lips uttered those words?”

“Yes, certainly: is he not a Christian? Would you not allow him the ground to be buried in?”

“Would that I had only that to allow him;—go on with the story.”

“It is ended, my king. We tried our fortune once more: but the enemy stood on their guard; we killed many, many also of ours remained on the field: twice, while I was running without sword through the fight, encouraging my Saracens, d’Angalone covered me with his shield, and defended me from the blows of the enemy. Giordano, I thanked you then, and repeat it now, and always. In the meanwhile the Provençals were surrounding the town, and their infantry had begun to appear from the gate of Abbruzzo; we ran the risk of being surrounded and captured. I knew you were safe, Angalone was with me; I had obtained what I desired: we closed up our ranks, and scattering all that opposed our way, we came out to the open country.”

The shadows of night were beginning to disperse in the east, objects assumed a distinct form, and day was about to appear. The trumpets sounded the departure; the king mounted his horse, his troops followed him; they crossed the river Volturno at a little distance from where they had passed the night, and by way of Talese they marched on to Benevento. Tradition states that Manfred, seeing around him so many faithful followers, often repeated this sentence: “Even misfortune is good for something; I have proved these men, and can trust to them as to the edge of my sword.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BATTLE OF BENEVENTO.

But he has more fear of a life of shame than of a glorious death, and trusting entirely in the mercy of the Lord, raises his right hand and signs himself with the sign of the cross, then takes his sword, and turns his horse. . . .—*Round Table*, chap. 28.



ET the conquered king learn to die. The day destined for the end of his glory, let that same day close the eyes of his mortal life. Let him look around from the field where might has prostrated him; what hope flatters him? There is not an arm that would rise for him; the tears of the afflicted that are lost in the hurrahs of victory only now insistingly penetrate into his soul. If between the degradation of being dragged in triumph behind the chariot of the conqueror and death, he has chosen degradation, those that bore his rule were less than reptiles, and the crown fell upon his head like the tile on the head of Pyrrhus. Is he not awed at the insults of the cowards who run as to a feast, to rejoice under the shadow of the great fall? Is he not stung by the mockery of the traitors? At the end of his meditation, does he not see a revenge of blood, a justice, upon the edge of the enemy's sword? The conqueror fears God,—and will not kill him. Does it suit the man, on whom hung the destinies of millions of his fellow-beings, to taste the bitterness of panting doubtfully for his own? The bitter hour is past; half eternity will not compensate for it! . . . he will live—behold his life!—his thoughts fixed upon a diadem that will never adorn his temples, nor those of his children, pining under its light as his hope gradually approaches its setting, like the flower, once a nymph, under the light of the star that has ceased to love her; * he will shake the iron bars of his prison, bite them, stain them with blood, and fall ex-

* Clytie, changed to a sunflower.

hausted of strength in despair at his own impotence. His thoughts are like vultures devouring his entrails ; he fears every food ; he drinks no liquid before he has scanned it across the light ; he dares not move a step before he has tried the place where he is forced to put his foot ; his own shadow frightens him. . . . And his children ? He is not allowed to see them, nor does he wish to. What to teach them ? How to curse ?—The clanking of their chains, better than his voice, will make them grow up in hatred. Will he show them his misery ? Is not that which they bear enough ? He desires neither to see nor to hear a living soul ; his mind has become fierce, his intellect wild ; no one speaks to him, and yet he bends his ears to unknown voices and replies. Often a remembrance of victory inflames his eyes ; but suddenly lowering them, they see such a miserable object that pity itself has no tears for it ; he shuts his eyes and his heart so close, that not even a sigh escapes. Victory always exalts one, although sometimes defeat does not degrade ; but the soul of bronze that can survive it has paid a penalty greater than the reward of a crown.

I accuse no one ; and if the ashes of one should stir in their cell of death, and utter a sigh . . . oh ! I have not wished to weigh my hand upon the great man that sleeps. Rewards and punishments beyond the grave belong to God's judgment, and man should not dare to usurp the attributes of the Omnipotent. But what eyes can follow the fatal man even to the tomb, without shedding tears of blood ? Surrounded by daily vexations that poison life, and allow not even the comfort of great misfortunes,—that of suffering without shame ;—pierced by minutest wounds, from which life oozes out drop by drop ; forced to beg bread from those who, by the baptism of fire, were of his own religion,* . . . may Heaven grant rest to the ashes of the warrior ! But ought he, the man of might, who had looked upon the universe from such an height that hardly any human mind has power to imagine, have

* “ *Firai demander la soupe à ce braves : quiconque a reçu le baptême de feu, est de ma religion.*—(Words of Napoleon.)

allowed himself to fall so low? It was in his choice to die by the sword of the brave or by the perfidy of fear. *He did not expect this.** And what? He who scrutinized mockingly the vices of men, and used them as a foundation of his power, ought he to have trusted faith? In that island where, like a new Prometheus, a deep hate chained him, every day the fiery planet taught him how the man who had known no equal upon earth ought to have died; for there the sun, unlike our climate, is not accompanied by the sad twilight, but rises suddenly in the fulness of its rays in the firmament, and as suddenly abandons it to the empire of darkness.† Who knows how many times that austere man, contemplating the solemn example, lowered his looks depressed, and murmured words of grief over the lost opportunity! Oh! if, falling, the hero had not disappeared in him! oh, if he himself had not revealed the secret, that his heart was composed of clay like all the other children of Adam! if the curve of his life had not grown pale at its setting, but, still sparkling with light, had sunk in the silence of the ages,—who born of woman could we compare with him? The Wisdom that governs creation willed, perchance, to show by his solemn vicissitudes to what extremes it can exalt and depress a human soul? If it be so, I am overwhelmed; for the last act of him who could number his victories with his years, the astonished nations cannot yet decide whether it ought to be attributed to constancy or cowardice.‡

Beautiful is the rest after victory, but more beautiful the morning hailed by the greedy thought of conquest. The predestined Charles hardly perceived the first dawning of day, before, calling his squires, he ordered them to fasten on his heaviest armor; several times he reproved them for their slowness, and by his impatience he gave occasion for delay. Finally he comes forth, all armed;

* Words of Napoleon in leaving the English ship "Bellerophon."

† See description of the island of Saint Helena.

‡ To die a prince, or live a slave—
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

BYRON'S *Ode to Napoleon.*

the vanguard waited for him in the square, ready to start ; being received with loud hurrahs, he replies modestly : " We have not yet conquered."

The orders are given, the march begun. Charles pursues his rival with the ardor of a falcon, for he knew too well that fortune often changes by the delay of one hour, and his troops were invincible in the first flush of victory. He did not take the road to Capua, being the longest ; but by the way of Venafrò, where, knowing that the excesses committed at San Germano would set the Neapolitans against him, and also severely admonished for it by the pontifical legate, he strove to repair the fault. Therefore he received with kindness the syndics of the cities, and dismissed them with assuring expressions, telling them to report to their citizens that he had come to restore religion, and to vindicate them against their tyrant. Then he proceeded to worship the bones of the martyr St. Nicandro, from which bones there percolates once a year a white moisture called *manna* ; in truth, when he visited the shrine, the season of the miracle was past. Nevertheless, the Count of Provence prayed so much Cardinal Pignatelli, and Pignatelli the monks, and the monks the saint, that this latter condescended, for that once, to renew the miracle out of season. It is not to be told what a hubbub that made among the people : they recollected that King Manfred had never visited those bones, that the saint never had renewed the miracle for him ; Charles was therefore a Christian, a true champion of the church ;—Manfred a heretic. They would never support the rule of a renegade, of an excommunicated man. The Archbishop of Cosenza removed the interdict, and scattered with full hands the treasures of indulgences. The bells pealed out glorious anthems ; the priests called the new master, 'the arm of Juda ;' the citizens, 'the brave and courteous ;'—only a few, more prudent, were silent and waited. The short stay which he made at Venafrò erased the bad impression made at San Germano, reassured the wavering, confirmed his partisans. He left that city, accompanied by the good wishes of its people, and advanced along the banks of the Vol-

turno toward its mouth, in order to cross it with greater security ; for although the river widens the nearer it gets to the sea, yet it runs less rapidly than above Venafrò, for the reason that, at this point, it is joined almost instantaneously by the rivers Cavaliere and della Lorda. Already several companies had forded the river, when Charles noticed a squadron of horsemen coming his way, he stood in doubt as to their intention, but as they approached, he recognized from their flags and dresses that they were ambassadors. These had been deputed to render him lawful homage as liege lord by Rocca d'Arce, Rocca d'Evandro, Rocca Guglielma, Rocca Monfina, Castel Forte, and many other fortified places, some spontaneously, some instigated by Count Rinaldo. They were welcomed ; Charles praised them for their submission, and assured them that, trusting to their good faith, he would introduce no garrison into their fortresses ; —in reality because he did not wish to diminish his army, for he intended to assail his enemy with all his forces, knowing that, in the condition in which things were, the sum total would depend upon the issue of a single battle. Then he dismissed them—he loading them with *promises*, and the cardinal with *indulgences*. Having crossed the Volturno, he advanced by forced marches, skirting the foot of the Matese mountains, so that towards evening he arrived before Alife. This city also opened the gates to him, and if he had been less severe, the citizens would have carried him in triumph through the street. Charles repressed that movement, and they contented themselves by hurrahs so loud as to stifle the voice of conscience that called them traitors. If, however, there is any cause that can excuse treachery, the people of Alife had one. They kept in mind the offence of Frederick II., who, through Count Celano, destroyed by fire and sword their unhappy city. The citizens begged him for pardon, but the emperor was inexorable. He, dying, left to the people of Alife a legacy of revenge, and they made his son pay for it. Indeed, shameful was the crime, more shameful the revenge ; but one sin brings another, and infamy perpetuates itself in the world.—Talese did no

better than Alife. An ancient tradition asserted that the ruins of a city, which were visible a mile distant from that city, had been once another Talese, destroyed by the Saracens; hence the Taleseans hated them, and for their sakes would have wished Manfred also dead; nevertheless, at the first appearance of the troops of Charles they closed the gates, and made a show of resistance. The Provençals were getting ready to assail it, when the Archbishop of Cosenza, in full pontificals, advanced under the walls and ordered the citizens to open the gates. If they resisted, it would be the worse for them, for in a short time a deserved punishment would fall upon them, both in this life and in the next. Talese fell into the power of Charles, in the same manner that Jericho fell into the hands of the Jews, except that in Talese the walls did not fall. Charles took no other revenge from that shadow of resistance, except depriving the city of the honor of his presence. He marched on, and advanced to St. Agata dei Goti, not that he hoped to take possession of it as he did, but because, if the battle was to be fought in the plains of Benevento, it was necessary for him to hold it, otherwise it would have threatened too close on his rear. Destiny granted him more than he desired. Two miles before reaching St. Agata he met a solemn embassy that offered to him the keys of the city, and with humble prayers recommended it. Such unexpected good fortune moved the heart of Charles, although naturally so fierce, that he hardly knew what to say. He entered St. Agata exultingly, and was seen, while passing the gate, to bend in the saddle, and kiss the threshold. Both French and Romans said that in that tour, rather than conquest, there appeared clearly the hand of Providence; Charles himself began to believe it also. The idea of being predestined seems a great thing, and seduces even great minds. Without even taking rest, armed as he was, he rode to the church that contains the sacred relics of St. Menna the Solitary, and rendered thanks to the Most High.

The fatal day approached. Manfred, on the day after Charles had entered St. Agata dei Goti, called a council of

war at Benevento to discuss whether they should accept battle, or shut themselves up within the defences of the city. Count Giordano d'Angalone, by Manfred's orders, spoke the first. "In my opinion," said he, "the same reasons that ought to have ruined Charles' enterprise at San Germano will ruin it at Benevento; we must keep him at bay; you must not be impatient of delay; by dallying, we use up the enemy. Your Serene Highness will in the meanwhile get reinforcements from the troops that Corrado of Antioch has in the Abbruzzis, from those that the Counts Federigo, Ventimiglia and Capece are collecting in Calabria and Sicily, and it will give also time to the barons to bring up their contingencies."

"Count d'Angalone," interrupted Manfred, "to-day the situation is very different from what it was at San Germano: what then seemed favorable, now would be injurious; our honor requires an amend."

"Save your Serene Highness' grace, you know better than any other that the affairs of the kingdom are not governed by the same rules as the songs of the troubadours; and honor belongs to the conqueror . . ."

"And what then?" interposed Ghino di Tacco; "since this Provençal thief was so ready to invest the kingdom, and is so ready of wit as to send a glove in token of challenge to the son of an emperor calling him out to battle, shall we be so cowardly as not to reply to the call?"

"How long since has it been the custom, my brave knight," added d'Angalone, "that we should fight when it pleases the enemy? Duels perhaps have different laws, but for battles, the most honorable time is when you are most sure of success . . ."

"You speak like the wise master of war that you are," interrupted the Marquis and Count of Lancia; "nevertheless you must consider that, by the reinforcements that we have found at Benevento, we already outnumber the army of France; consider also that this raid of Charles will spread about with the fame of a victory, and he will be certainly reinforced by the Church of Rome, which is prone to aid when it is sure of a reward; and beside,—I say it with deep regret, but yet experience has taught me

to say it,—who knows how many people, flattered by the hope of change, deluded by Charles' promises, and even inspired by their ill-will, may not rebel against our king on account of this delay? This is a fire that we must quench at all costs; bad example is very contagious; and if it spread in the provinces, we shall have both internal and foreign war, when at present we have only the latter."

"*Machatub Ruby!*" exclaimed the Emir, "it is destined; if Allah so will, you will find your fate accomplished while you are preparing to resist it; if we are to win, the troops we have will be sufficient; if we are to lose, those that are to come will not be sufficient."

"I repeat to you that precautions for the probabilities of victory are never too many, and this fatalist doctrine of yours does good neither to the soul nor to the body; besides, the Gospel condemns it."

Thus replied the wise Giordano; and although the only one to sustain his own opinion, he would with his wise argument have succeeded in persuading Manfred, when of a sudden a loud sound of trumpets cut short the words in his mouth. . . . Manfred sprang up, grasping his sword, the assembled captains did the same, crying: "To arms! to arms!" Giordano himself, without his brain contributing to it at all, carried away by the battle cry, found his hand on the hilt of his sword, and his voice sounding "to arms."

"Be it 'to arms,' then!" exclaimed Manfred, exalted by military ardor; then hastily commanded: "Count d'Angalone, Calvagno, you take your German companies, and form with them a single battalion in column, rather than in line; it will be the vanguard. Let it attack first, and strive to break the enemy's ranks, and advance further and further without disbanding, even if it reaches to the rear of Charles. You, Count Lancia, Ghino, with your Tuscans and Lombards, and you, Jussuff, with all your Saracens, will compose the main body of the battle; you will follow immediately the vanguard, not too near though,—half a bow-shot distance; you will avail yourself of the first impression made by the Germans, which infal-

libly must take place ; rush after them, disband in skirmish order ; if necessary, dismount from your horses, and disperse the enemy's ranks. Rogiero, we entrust the royal standard to you ; we at the head of the bridge with our Apulians will command the reserve. Go and execute all these orders ; we will join you in an instant ; indeed, I shall not recommend you to do your duty, only pray fortune to favor your bravery."

"Elena, my sweet wife," spoke Manfred, hastening to the queen, armed as he was with mail and armor ; he shook her delicate hand with his iron gauntlet so strongly, that the blue marks remained on it for some time. "Elena, farewell ! Before this sun sets I shall be either victorious or dead." Then, without waiting a reply, he turned to his children, embraced and kissed them : "You will be happy, I hope ; but if fate should decree otherwise, remember always that you are grandchildren of emperors, children of the noble Manfred. The only advice that a conquered king can give to his children to well conduct themselves in life, is to know how to die. Fear not death ; it is false that it is a terrible thing ; the nearer man approaches it, the less repugnant it seems, and on the point of meeting it, even beautiful. Preserve your days, my children, in spite of persecution, in spite of misery, but do not forget that heaven has prepared an asylum against infamy—the grave. . . ." They were all weeping ; Manfred smiled lovingly on them, then added : "Is this the way you give courage to your king for the approaching battle ? Is it becoming in you to bid farewell with tears to the warrior in the moment of danger ? In truth, I swear to you that before long those tears will bathe the cheeks of the Provençal women. . . . But destiny. . . . Oh ! where art thou, my faithful Benincasa ?"

"Are there wanting faithful servants to your sacred person ?" exclaimed, coming forward with grave steps, the king's physician, John of Procida ; "if my king will honor me with his commands, as long as my life lasts I swear to execute them."

"Generous son of a generous father, we doubt not

your valor. If you had the years of Benincasa beside his name and resemblance, we should not know that there was any difference between you two ; yet your offer is so acceptable to us, that we will entrust our family to you alone, though still so young. If the end of our reign is decreed above, if the race of Frederick shall nevermore rule the possessions of Sicily, you will conduct in safety my wife and children to Lucera, or, better, to Manfredonia. . . . You, my beloved, will repair wherever you please, whether to Epirus to your father, or to Arragon to the court of Peter. Certainly you will have lost your crown, lost me your husband, whom you would have loved even without a crown ; our children will remain to you,—our children, queen, support to your failing years, comfort for your last misfortunes ; to know that you will be safe after my death gives strength to my soul. Come now, a kiss ; . . . weep not so ; . . . you know not whether it will be the last. Only God knows.” Then he loosened himself from their embraces, speaking to John of Procida : “ Remember, at Manfredonia ; nor surrender the fortress, either by threats or prayers, until there should arrive galleys from Catalonia or Greece. . . .”

Rogiero, who, while Manfred was in the arms of his family, had remained immovable, only four steps distant, now attempted to raise his looks and move a step ; he attempted to speak, but his words issued broken, his lips trembled convulsively. Yole fixed her eyes on him, with the pupils intent, eyes dilated in a terrible manner ; she also attempted to reply to him, but her heaving heart prevented the utterance of a single word. She tried again ;—she employed every power of her mind, every faculty of her body, to this effect, but in vain ; the veins of her temples swelled with a lead color, her face reddened with a flush of blood ; it seemed that her whole life would escape in those words ; nature could not withstand that impossible effort, and, with a piercing cry, she fell, pale, senseless, in her mother’s arms.

The Provençal trumpets call once again the enemy to battle. Manfred, seeming to hear in that sound a voice of mockery, rushes to the door, crying : *Swabia ! Swabia !*

Rogiero, seeing the king departing, looks at Yole, raises his hand to Heaven, sighing : " Grant that I may see her happy, or never see her again ! " and follows him. Elena, supporting her daughter, cannot follow Manfred with her steps, but she follows him with a cry. Only Manfredino runs after his father's steps, crying : " Father, father ! *will you come back this evening ? " Unhappy boy ! he first hears his steps distinctly, then a confused noise, finally nothing but silence. He returns weeping, with his hands in his hair, saying : " Father is gone, gone, and has not promised me to come back this evening ! "

The army of Charles, arriving on the summit of the neighboring mountains, admires the city of Benevento, so famous for its beauty and antiquity, no less than for the erroneous traditions of the people. Its origin is lost in the darkness of mythology, although there are not wanting authors who assert that it was built by Diomedes, king of the Ætolis, after the Trojan war. There are few records of it during the dominion of the Romans, since the history of this nation absorbs all other histories of the conquered cities ; and as long as it lasted, Rome meant the whole of Italy. Chronicles relate that Totilas took it from the dominion of the empire of the East ; but its greatness begins after the conquest of the Longobards, for Otaris having subdued Italy as far as Reggio in Calabria, founded it into a rich dukedom, and gave it in fief to Tatone, his favorite general. We will not give the chronology of the dukes that succeeded him ; we will only state that, on the descent of Charlemagne in Italy, the duchy was not suppressed, but confirmed to the Duke Arechi, with the condition that he should *shave his beard*, and cause all his Longobards to do likewise. Also, that he should coin money with the name of Charles, and should destroy the fortresses of Salerno, of Acerenza and Conza. Grimoaldo, valorous son of Arechi, did not keep these conditions, alleging *that he was free and unstained, both on his father's and on his mother's side, and with the aid of God he would maintain himself free*. Nor did his

deed belie his words, for he maintained himself independent against the empire ; caused himself to be anointed by the bishops as a king, and used a royal crown. The dukes that succeeded this Grimoaldo until the Normans are not distinguished except by the different image impressed on their medals, or by some crime. The new masters, the Normans, bitterly oppressing the people, forced them to implore the aid of Pope Leo IX., who went to Germany to the Emperor Henry III., and agreed with him to exchange the one hundred silver marks and white palfrey imposed by Benedict II. upon the church of Banberg, for the lordship of Benevento, provided he furnished him with troops to conquer it. Pope Leo succeeded in his enterprise with the aid of the people, and gave the investiture of the dukedom to Rodolphus, a Longobard, who shortly after was expelled by Anfred the Norman, Count of Apulia, elder brother of Guiscard. By this new offence the asperity between Rome and the Normans increased, and there arose from it a tedious series of small encounters, which have nothing in common with great battles except the slaughter. Finally, in the year 1059, these contentions were appeased by a treaty signed in the city of Melfi, and Benevento was restored to the Holy See, to be later snatched away from it again. The greatest damage which the contested city received was inflicted by Frederick II., who in 1242, after having conquered it, levelled her walls. It bore the marks of the ferocity and ambition of those who had first oppressed it, and then chosen it for a residence. The aspect itself was the history of its vicissitudes. Near it was admired a triumphal arch of Parian marble, erected to Trajan, to commemorate the road that he had constructed at his expense from Brindisi to Rome. A portion of the walls that were not demolished by Frederick, showed a strange style of architecture, introduced by the northerners into Italy ; the new repairs, and the eight gates constructed by the orders of Manfred, the *renaissance* of arts. The castle built by the Holy See, at the instance of the pontifical governor, rising with its brown towers over the city, showed, and perhaps still shows to the traveller, what

was in those times the solemn majesty of the successors of St. Peter.

The Count of Provence, the more he looked at the city, the more he thought it worthy of conquest. He scanned her round many times with his eyes, to discover a weak point in which he could make a breach, and attempt an assault; but he saw that it was turreted with such mastery of military art, that it would have been an impossible thing to conquer it by force. He sighed, and turned to contemplate the valley beneath. It was spacious, and worthy to fight a decisive battle in; the rivers Calore and Sabato, joining their waters at the end of Benevento, ran through it, and a magnificent bridge offered a wide passage from one bank to the other. He asked what was the name of the valley. They replied, "Santa Maria della Grandella."

"Oh, if we could only draw the enemy into this valley!" exclaimed Charles to Montfort.

"Let us rush precipitously to occupy that bridge, and . . ."

"And the enemy, recognizing his advantage, will not come out to fight. . . . Challenge the enemy with all your trumpets."

This was the first call that interrupted the council of war of Manfred. After this signal he stopped, panting with hope and fear, to espy what would come out of it. The gates open, and the companies of the enemy's troops issue forth and spread in order of battle through the valley, towards the head of the bridge.

"Do my eyes deceive me?" asked Charles of the barons that stood around him; "is Manfred coming out? Yes, he comes out. . . . *Bon Dieu*, great thanks! *Behold, barons, the day that you have so much desired! . . . Monjoy! Monjoy! the battle is near.*"

"My fair cousin," said in undertone Montfort to the Count of Provence, "there are some knights in the enemy's camp. . . ." And the rest he whispered in such a way that not one of the barons that stood around could hear him. Charles seemed at first indignant, and absolutely refused; but Montfort insisted, and he finally con-

sented, saying, "Do as you wish, cousin ; but mind that he be worthy of wearing it. Certainly, there are some terribly brave men among the knights of the enemy."

"Leave it to me : I will find your man, a heart of iron, with a head in the clouds." And so saying, Montfort sought among the files a Gascon gentleman named Sir Enry de Cocence, and reported to him that the king, in consideration of his many merits, had thought of allowing him to wear his own royal arms, and appoint him commander of the vanguard. "I," added he slyly, "might have contended for the honor, but as a good friend of yours desisted. Think of the honor that will redound to your family. Think, Sir Enry, that henceforth you will be able to engraft in your arms the lily of France."

"Truly, great is the honor that King Charles confers on us," replied the knight, "yet not greater than the race of the Viscounts of Cocence is accustomed to. Look, Sir Montfort, this gold bit, *gules* ! Do you know the origin of it ?"

"I have heard it spoken of, Sir Henry. . . ."

"What ! do you ignore perhaps, Sir Montfort, that Sir Regnault de Cocence quartered it for having held the bridle of King Clodoveus—may the Lord rest his soul !—after the battle of Soissons ? And these hands clasped in *or* ?"

"Yes, indeed, viscount ; but come, for the king is waiting for us, and the enemy is advancing."

"Godfroy Viscount, flag-bearer of the Emperor Charlemagne,—peace to his imperial soul,—had them cut at the battle of Chiusa, while carrying the oriflamme ; and the chronicle relates that Sir Godfroy, without flinching, seized it with his teeth, and thus restored it to the emperor, who said to him : 'O sir . . .'"

"Yes, yes ; it is to be found in the history of the kingdom, page four thousand one hundred and eight. I will show you the passage : it is said that it was written by Arduin, . . . a very learned man that Arduin, Viscount—chief councillor of Charlemagne, and deacon of St. Rhemis." And thus interrupting him, and dragging him

along, Montfort led him to the presence of Charles, saying to him : "Here is the viscount."

"Sir Enry, your lofty deeds have found so much merit in our eyes, that we have come to the resolution of arming you with our armor, and of placing you to the vanguard of the army." He made a sign to his esquires, who surrounded the viscount, and began to unbuckle his armor. "*Gran mercy*, Sir Charles : great is the honor you do me, yet such as the race of the Cocence has been accustomed to from time immemorial. You know . . ." (and "*tout doucement*," said he, vexed, to the esquires, who were pulling off his armor very roughly)—"you know, Sir Charles, the origin of the gold bit?"

"St. Denis ! Do you imagine that we are so ignorant of the glories of France?"

"Certainly, just what I say : and the hands clasped in . . . ?"

"Of course we do ; . . . great fame awaits you in that valley, Sir Enry."

"Man does what he can ; nevertheless we will do so much, Sir Charles, that you will remain satisfied : we will assail the enemy in the rear . . ." ("*Doucement*," said he to the esquires, who, in removing his gauntlets, had scratched his hands)—"in the rear, crossing over those hills. . . . It is true that, before reaching the rear of the enemy, we will meet Benevento ; but we will take it by force, and then . . ."

Thus speaking, he had been left in his leathern doublet ; —the enemy was fast approaching the plain ; Charles began to arm him with his armor, and while doing so he advised him, saying : "No, Sir Enry ; you will leave the trouble of guiding the movements to the marshall Mirepoix and to Vandamme ; you try to strike good blows : the command may destroy you . . ." (at this point he buckled his spurs.) "I could swear that no knight will have gained his golden spurs better than you." Then he took away from his neck the order of Commander *d' Outremer*, and placing it on that of the viscount, added : "This henceforth will honor your life or your grave."—The Order of *Outremer*, known also by the name of the *Vessel* and

the *Double Moon*, was instituted by St. Louis, brother of Charles d'Anjou, in 1262, in his second voyage into Africa. It was composed of a chain of scallop shells intermixed with half moons, from which hung a medallion that represented a ship upon the sea. Every object had its meaning : the scallop shells indicated the shores of *Aigues-mortes*, where the French embarked ; the half moons, the war undertaken against the infidels ; the ship, their crossing the sea. In truth, Charles recalled a very disastrous campaign with those insignia of the Holy Land upon his breast ; nevertheless, calculating the good that would accrue to him by this ostentation of piety, greater than the evil by the lowered reputation of arms, he wore it always in Italy.

The viscount being fully armed, Charles ordered his horse to be brought ; the generous animal appeared, covered with an immense cloth embroidered with *fleur-de-lis*, and as soon as he recognized his master, he neighed. Charles showed some repugnance in yielding him, yet finally, tossing his head, "Go," said he, "Benevento is well worth a caparisoned horse." This business ended, "Barons," he added, "listen to the orders : you, Sir Viscount de Cocence, Marshal Mirepoix, Vandamme, Clermont, take with you one thousand French knights, and sustain the first assault ; the battle will be composed of the brigades of the Flemings, the Brabantians, the Picardians, the Romans and the knights of the queen ; Guillaume l'Etendard will be flag-bearer, and commanded by our cousin Robert of Flanders, the constable Giles Lebrun, and Beltrand de Balz ; we will command the reserve with the Provençals ; we will have with us Guy de Montfort, Crary, and you, Count Guerra, with the Guelphs of Tuscany ; the war-cries are the usual ones of France, '*Monjoy, Chevaliers.*' Go then, my children, and acquire glory."

They were about moving, when, riding on a very white mule, and surrounded by prelates, appeared Bartholomew Pignatelli, Archbishop of Cosenza, arrayed in his most magnificent robes ; the mule itself was covered by a cloth of gold embroidered with silver kettles ; the servants also

wore garments of gold with silver kettles, and even the major-domos carried golden maces with silver kettles. In truth, this armorial device is very glorious, since the chronicles of the times relate that a certain Landulph, captain of the galleys of King Roger during the siege of Constantinopolis, was so bold, that, penetrating into the kitchens of the Emperor Emmanuel, he carried off three silver kettles, and then assumed them as a family pretence; still it smacks a little of ridicule, and the vanity of the archbishop in sticking it up everywhere rendered it still more so. Pignatelli coming before Charles, asked him gravely whether he desired him to read the bulls of the indulgences granted by Alexander IV., Urban IV., and Clement IV., to all those who fought in this holy crusade. Charles replied that there was no need of it, for he knew them all *par cœur*; he would thank him, however, if he would only bless them.

The archbishop then took in his hand the sprinkler, without dismounting from his mule, and with many goodly orisons blessed them; then he recited in haste a sort of peroration, in which he called Manfred, son of Acab, accursed by the sacred anathema, race of vipers, Arian, follower of Arnold, of Priscillian, and an atheist, all at the same time; and on the contrary calling the French true children of Israel, descendants in direct line from the tribe of Judah. He sang the *Exurge, Domine, et defende causam tuam*, etc., and dismissed them to slaughter each other merrily in yonder plains.

“Now are mine ears with notes of anguish thrilled.”

On both sides, crying “*Monjoy*” and “*Swabia*,” the armies rush at a great pace on each other, anxious of victory. The French, under the orders of Marshal Mirepoix, assail in a rather wide line of battle, because, seeing the German squadron advance *en masse*, they hope to surround them in the flanks with the extreme right and left of their line of battle, commanded by the brothers Vandamme. The German cavalry had in those days the reputation of unconquerable, and, to tell the truth, (so much things change in this world,) incapable then, for want of discipline,

of resistance, was insuperable in the first charge. Executing then the orders of the king, it persists against the centre of the enemy's vanguard, and presses onward with so much constancy that, partly by its great valor, partly because the French centre was too weak, it began to waver, to scatter, and finally to disperse. The extreme wings of the vanguard, that had already advanced, forming a semicircle to attack the German flanks, met of a sudden the main battle of Manfred, that marched in line at a short distance from the vanguard; so that, instead of attacking on the flanks, they were obliged to defend themselves in the front from overwhelming forces. Fortune still led on the sad flattery of early success: the centre squadrons of the battle, composed of the troops of Ghino and the Saracens, taking advantage of the gap opened by the Germans, galloped at full speed within it, crying "*Swabia! Swabia!*" which resounded through the neighboring valleys, and increased the terror. The Saracens added to this the incessant beating of their drums; for in that age they were the only ones who used this invention of theirs, which was afterwards adopted by European civilization to transmit signals in war, and to tear the ears of the citizens in peace; adding to it the fifes of its own, to complete the harmony. Robert of Flanders and the Constable Lebrun hastened forward with the French centre to support the wavering fates of the day. "*Monjoy and St. Martin!*" cry they in their turn, and bravely meet the enemy. The knights of the queen formed a part of this division, and tradition states that many valiant encounters took place, which history has not transmitted to us; it only narrates that Sir Enry de Cocence, maddened that he had been driven back more than two bows' distance, rushed furiously through the ranks, exclaiming, "Christian knights, onward for St. Denis; . . . what will they say of me in France? Shame on you! onward! . . . onward! . . . our enemies are Turks, heretics . . . their swords do not cut, God has excommunicated them." Two knights of Manfred, noticing Cocence, whom they mistook for Charles d'Anjou moving about so openly among his soldiers, detached themselves from the ranks, and placing their spears in rest,

rushed upon him : these were Ghino and Rogiero. Indeed, the bystanders warned the viscount of the imminent danger, but he, waiting for them in an attitude of defiance, cried : "Now you will see good fun." The knights arriving at a full gallop struck him simultaneously in the middle of the breast, in such way that both the points pierced him through at a cross angle, and, lifting him from the saddle, dragged him a step or two, thus transfixing in their spears. There arose a cry of victory in Manfred's army, believing that the Count of Provence had been killed, and the battle continued more fiercely than ever. Nor did the French defend themselves less bravely, although it appeared evident that in the end they would have lost. Thus belaboring each other, the two armies had passed the morning hours, when on the bloody field Giordano d'Angalone, without crest on his helmet, his mail ripped, his armor bent in several parts, holding in his hand his broken sword, met the Emir Jussuff. "Give me your scimeter," said he ; "we only need a few more blows, and the victory is ours."

"Follow me, count," replied the Emir, "and I will provide you with a sword." And so saying, he set spurs against Clermont, who from his arms, and more so from his acts, showed himself a very valiant knight. Clermont, seeing that warrior rush upon him so heedlessly, placed himself in guard, sure of his back-hand stroke ; when he had reached the proper distance he struck with his full force. The Emir, with wonderful dexterity, bent his body upon the neck of the horse, and the enemy's sword passed by, hardly grazing his back. He then pulled the bridle of his swift Borak, turned him back, and let fall a blow on the helmet of Clermont, who, relaxing his hold, opening his arms, fell dead on the field. The Emir bent from his saddle, seized Clermont's sword, and handing it to Count d'Angalone, said : "Take it,—thus Jussuff provides his friends with swords."

"Brave man !" replied Giordano, "I will use it in such way as to correspond worthily to the manner in which it was provided for me." And he disappeared in the thickest of the fight.

The army of Charles, repulsed on all sides, had only left on the field the knights of the queen, who, resolved to die rather than retreat, had formed themselves into a hollow square, contesting against all the army of Manfred. Giordano Lancia, judging it unwise that all the forces of the king should be occupied against that handful of men that were gradually being destroyed in their outer lines; fearing also that those that had been dispersed would reorganize and return to the assault, called Ghino and d'Angalone, and ordered them to detach their squadrons, and pursue relentlessly the retreating French; he would remain there to destroy that last residue of the army of Charles. They obeyed the order, and with loosened bridle galloped after the fugitives, killing both those who resisted and those who surrendered, granting quarter to none. Every mercy was extinct; the fierce slaughter saddened even the sight of the conquerors themselves.

"*Bon Dieu !* I cannot stand that sight," cries Charles, who, from the summit of the hill called the Stone of Rosetto contemplated that slaughter; "my spear, squires, . . . my horse; . . . here, quick, to the rescue!"

"Fair cousin," holding him back exclaims Guy de Montfort, "be still for Saint Martin, let him win yet for a quarter of an hour, and then the victory will be ours. . ."

"But I will not allow . . ."

"And I swear to you by the soul of my father that I will have you arrested; . . . be patient!"

The Germans, in spite of d'Angalone's remonstrances, attracted by the greediness of gain, broke the ranks, as if sure of the victory, and disbanded here and there for plunder. The horses wandered loose, for the knights, having dismounted, began to search in the pockets of the dead and dying, to snatch the precious ornaments from the armors, using their swords for a lever. Some, stretching their rapacious hands on the corpses, tore violently either cloth or leather that suited their wants, carrying sometimes part of the skin with it; others also, unable to pull off the rings from the dead men's fingers, cut them close to the hand, and placed ring and fingers in their

pockets,—so disgustingly does human rapacity shows itself. At this moment Ghino and d'Angalone beating the rascals with the butts of their spears, "To horse, scoundrels?" they exclaim, "to horse!" The beaten ones, intent on booty, either felt not the blows, or, running further on, shook their shoulders, and returned to the plunder worse than before.

"Now is the time to descend, cousin," said Montfort; and Charles mounting on horseback, thus spoke to his knights: "Follow me, noble barons; you will see my crest where there will be more glory to reap. You, Guido Guerra, remind your Florentines that, conquering at Benevento, they will regain their desired Florence." And he rushed to the plain.

A courier despatched by Count Lancia presents himself to Manfred, and says: "My lord the king, we have conquered."

The king, raising his eyes to Heaven with a spontaneous thought of thanking God for it, noticed the French reserve, that, coming down the declivity of the hill of Rosetto, was fast approaching the plain, and orders the courier: "Go, quick, return to Giordano, and tell him to be on his guard, for we have not conquered yet."

Then he stood fixed, contemplating the squadron of the Guelphs, and judging them, as they really were excellent soldiers, asked who were they. They told him the Guelphs of Florence. It is said that he remarked at this news: "Now, why have we not the aid of the Ghibellines, whom we have supported all over Italy with so much blood and treasure?" And more enraptured by the sight of that battalion that moved with such admirable order: "Indeed, those troops cannot lose to-day!" he said; meaning by this that, if he should win, he would have them taken in his pay, and restored to their state.

"To horse, rascals! to horse! Behold the enemy!" kept crying Ghino and Giordano; but the Provençals, galloping at full speed, were already on them. The Germans and the Italians, leaving, though unwillingly, their plunder, rose to oppose them; their horses, feeding about, had got away, and in the sudden panic many lost theirs,

and had to seize the first that came to hand. Hardly had they reformed their squadrons when the French fell upon them with most impetuous fury, and repulsed them some forty steps. Then the Germans made a stand. The space which divided them was spread with corpses ; the French wavered, abhorring to trample on the bodies of their fallen brothers. Charles, fearing that from that hesitation the enemy might take time to reorganize his ranks, and perhaps jeopardize the success of the battle, exclaims : " Come, knights, don't mind trampling upon them ; those dead brothers of ours will be happy to offer us their breasts as a path to victory. "*Monjoy ! Monjoy !*" And he was the first to gallop over them.

" Steady ! forward ! will you fly from those you have already defeated ? Manfred is watching us ; victory or death ! *Swabia ! Swabia !*" Ghino and Giordano might cry themselves hoarse, the soldiers advanced unwillingly, a panic had seized them. Montfort rushed about, fiercer than the others ; mounted upon a powerful Norman horse, striking right and left with his iron mace, belaboring terribly the people of Manfred. Ghino noticed him, and recognized him from his shield, for, after the tournament of Rome, he had laid aside the device of Italy reversed, and resumed that of his family, which bore *argent*, three ancient chairs *gules*. The good Tuscan could stand no longer the slaughter that he made of his men ; seizing therefore a lance from one of them, and placing it in rest, he rushed upon Montfort, crying : "*En garde*, for you are a dead man."

Montfort avoided the lance, and when Ghino had passed by him, flung his mace at him, but missed the blow. Ghino, lowering again his lance, galloped against Montfort ; this latter, with a bold face and trembling heart, endeavored to defend himself, when one of his esquires rushed at Ghino's back, and threw a javelin, which, passing through where the shoulder-piece joins to the back, hurled him from his horse to the ground, mortally wounded.

" Truly, Raul," said Montfort, smiling to his esquire, " the knight you have killed was a brave man, nor deserved to die treacherously ; nevertheless, it is well for

you, for a dead man wars no more, and the smell of a dead enemy is a perfume of roses." Saying which, he spurred his horse upon him, who, less brutal than his master, disdained to trample upon the fallen, and leaped clear over him.—Fool! He knew not that the heavens reserved for him a death a thousand times more miserable. It is to be believed that Providence, which caused his great-grandfather, Simon Montfort, to die of a stone fallen on his head at the siege of Tolosa, his grandfather Almericus of a dart in his loins under Tolemaides, and his father Simon of honorable wounds, defending the liberty of the English against King Henry, forbade to Guy, in punishment of his barbarity, the glory of falling upon the field of battle, now hereditary in his family. Having been taken prisoner in the naval battle fought between the Sicilians and Neapolitans in the Gulf of Naples in 1287, he ended in the squalor of a Sicilian prison a life which he had illustrated with famous deeds of arms, and contaminated with ferocious crimes.

Count Giordano d'Angalone saw that fall, and a mournful foreboding filled his soul; yet, resolved not to return defeated whence he had departed as a victor, finding himself near the squadron of the Guelphs, he rushed in the midst of it, desirous of a noble death. Opening his way impetuously, he felled many right and left till he reached the standard-bearer, Corrado da Montemagno of Pistoja; he seized the battle-flag with his left, while with his right he used his sword. Corrado in his turn held fast to it, defending himself. The *Paladins*, for thus they were called, as we noticed in a previous chapter, the twelve Guelphs who killed *Tacha* of Modena, surrounded Angalone, and wounded him mortally in several places. The brave knight heeded them not, and continued his fight with the standard-bearer, who, assailed by a stronger man, wounded also in many parts, let himself fall from the saddle almost at the same moment that d'Angalone also fell expiring, wrapped in the lily of Florence. Atrocious was the hatred of the Italian party-men in those times, and atrocious the deeds committed by them; brothers fought against brothers, sons against their fathers

(which made Shakspeare cry, "a plague on both your houses") ; hence, it is not without emotion that I find related in my chronicle, that the Guelphs, after the battle, gave an honorable interment to Count d'Angalone, burying him in the same grave with Corrado di Montemagno, and placed a cross over it, bearing on its right arm the name of Giordano, and on the left that of Corrado, and begging a *requiem* to the souls of these two brave knights killed on the field of battle.

The captains being dead, there was no way of stopping the flight. There was seen nothing but a running through the country, and nothing heard but "*Sauve qui peut.*" Retreating in this manner, they arrived where Giordano Lancia, having defeated the knights of the queen, was reorganizing his soldiers to lead them to the rescue of the battle. "Behold the enemy !" cried, pale with fear, the first who arrived. "What enemy?"—"The Guelphs of Florence, the French, a squadron of wild demons."—"Let them come ; we are here to fight them."

The French, arriving, charge with great valor the troops of Lancia, and are with equal bravery repulsed ; they reform their ranks, return to the charge, and are again repulsed. The third charge was the bloodiest. Nor because they are badly cut up, do they desist, but they attempt to charge the fourth time. Infinite the blows struck and parried, infinite the wounds, infinite the deaths ; but Lancia kept crying to his men, "Steady !" and these, upheld by the example, did not budge an inch. Rogiero fought in the front ranks. Manfred's flag stood safe in his hand as upon the top of a turret. The bravest men crowded around it with terrible impetus, and when he waved it to the wind, there arose a cry of joy, and the courage of the combatants would redouble.

When an invading army charges upon the enemy, a repulse is equivalent to a defeat. Charles felt that by that obstinate resistance the undertaking would fail. But though disheartened, he did not despair : rather, by reason of the danger itself, his mind more eagerly sought the way of success. Often we have observed that man in misfortune becomes wicked, and commits acts

that he never would have thought of in good fortune. This happened in the present case: the son of France had recourse to fraud, and discarding all the acknowledged laws of war of those days, intent only on causing the greatest possible injury to the enemy, he ordered to strike at the horses. This was against the convention mutually agreed upon by the two nations at war upon the manner of fighting; but victory absolves every sin committed to acquire it, and if Grotius proclaimed that one must keep faith with his enemies and cause them the least evil possible, we believe that he said this in July, but would not have confirmed it in January.

The order of Charles was quickly passed through the ranks, and from every side rose the cry: "*The rapier, the rapier! and wound the horses.*" It was immediately executed. The front ranks of Lancia, before they had time to defend themselves, found themselves unhorsed; Lancia himself had his horse killed under him; the unhorsed ones had to fall in disorder upon the ranks that stood behind them; these opened to save them, only in doing this they were not able to repulse the enemy: all rushed in together. French prowess, encouraged by the hope of victory, fought with redoubled energy. The soldiers of the king in that extreme emergency did not fail to themselves; equal was the bravery, but the conditions were unequal. There never was a more bloody battle, nor one fought with more courage, either in ancient or modern times. For a long time the valley of Sta. Maria della Grandella exhaled pestiferous vapors on account of the smell which the unburied bodies sent forth. For more than fifty years after, the white bones scattered through the fields attested with what rage thousands of victims had slaughtered each other; and even to this day it often happens that the cultivator, ploughing the earth, is suddenly stopped by some skeleton which comes across his plough.

Without helmet on his head, with his hair wet with perspiration and blood, wounded in the face, with the royal standard in his left hand torn to shreds, and the sword in his right hacked to the very hilt, Rogiero presents

himself to Manfred, and cries from afar: "To the rescue, my king, to the rescue!"

"What means this? Are the cowards abandoning the field? Where is Sir Ghino?"

"Dead . . ."

"D'Angalone?"

"Dead . . ."

"Vengeance of God! Barons, to the rescue! follow your king, he will lead you to glory or to death;" and spurred his horse. Hearing a very faint noise behind him, he turned his head. Perhaps only ten knights followed him; the remaining ones, to the number of one thousand four hundred knights, and perhaps four thousand foot soldiers, did not stir.

"Come, hasten, to the rescue! delay will be fatal," continues Manfred. The same impassibility on the part of his feudal nobles. The great treachery begins to dawn on the king's mind, his heart trembles. "O my faithful barons," exclaims he, anxiously approaching them, "onward for your own preservation, for that of your children. . . . I will not remind you of my benefits; . . . think of your honor, consider the shame . . ."

"We consider our souls; we desire absolution from the excommunication . . ."

"What excuse is this? Did you not fight with me against Pope Alexander? The year is not yet passed that you in armed bands performed several raids in the Roman Campania. Now, I don't ask you to invade other people's country, but to defend the kingdom."

"The kingdom is yours; defend it yourself, if you can."

"Yes, I can, if assisted by your valor; accustomed as you are to fight under the eagle of the son of Frederick, you will not abandon him in the midst of victory; fulfil the oath of fealty that you swore to me at Monreale and at Benevento; ah! let Manfred be for the second time indebted to you for the throne."

They replied to him only by sounding their trumpets in retreat, and turning their backs on the battle; incredible treachery, if the histories of the times, both Guelph and

Ghibelline, did not relate it. The Neapolitan feudal barons, in the same manner as the Poles in their ancient constitution, mounted on horseback when the kingdom was in danger, and, like them, formed the principal or the most numerous part of the army. Whoever has read the history of Poland, will wonder at the resemblance between the *Pospolitis* and the squadrons of the Neapolitan barons; the same show of dress, the same instability, the same manners; with only this difference, that the Poles defended what they supposed liberty,—the Neapolitans, the monarchy. Manfred, who doubted their good faith, had placed them under his immediate orders, trusting that his personal authority would have curbed their insincerity. He now perceived how they answered his hopes; he contemplated them a few moments, staggered by the unheard-of cowardice; finally he broke forth with this exclamation: "Fool that I was! and I begged them!" Then he raised his hand in the act of imprecating: "No, . . . you do not deserve even my imprecation, I condemn you to live! . . . fortunate I am, in that my glory and renown are not in their power, like my throne." He turned his horse, and with his voice and spurs urged him to a gallop. At that moment there happened a wonderful event: the silver eagle that he had for a crest fell on the pommel of his saddle. . . . He turned pale at the fatal augury, saying: "*Hoc est signum Dei*, for I had fixed this crest with my own hands, so that it could not fall."

He gathered all his powers; and, since he could not live as a king, he rushed into the thickest of the battle to die as a king.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE REVENGE.

Un' alma coronata si diparte,
 E lascia qui del suo gran nome un ombra.
 O del mondo vivente, o del non nato
 Occhi pietosi, nella morte sua
 Osservate, apprendete
 D'un gran regno che cade e d'un che nasce
 La vicenda solenne. . . .

CLEOPATRA, *Tragedia Antica.*

A crownéd soul departs,
 And leaves of his great name the shadow here.
 O pious eyes, now living or unborn,
 Look on, and from his death the lesson learn,
 How a great kingdom falls, and one uprises
 In solemn revolution.

M. G. M.



IF it was pity that shrouded the rays of the stars in the firmament the last night of February, 1265, and prevented their shining upon that wicked field, why does every day the sun issue forth from the east to illuminate deeds that night has no darkness deep enough to hide? A heavy, thick, foggy atmosphere covers the valley of Santa Maria della Grandella; to the noise of the striking weapons, to the glittering of swords, to the cries of threats and mercy, silence has succeeded—silence and darkness, mournful companions of death! Only here and there a sigh of a dying man, a calling of father or son by some agonized sufferer. But these groanings sounded feeble as the breath of the evening breeze that hardly stirs the leaves on the trees, and passes by; they disturb not that solemn stillness. All is war in this world; yet the wild beast devours, but hides again in the thickest of the wood. We (I know not whether more foolish or perverse) dare to boast of the slaughter, and call it victory, and give thanks to the Most High for it, as if to associate Him with our

crimes. The dew of Heaven falls equally sorrowfully upon the bodies of the Apulians and the Provençals; and, for my part, when I consider that the dew begins and ends a day, I imagine to myself nature weeping over the unhappy race of Adam. They have all abandoned the fallen ones upon the field; the defeated ones are seeking with the anxiety of terror an asylum for the life which they have saved from the enemy's sword; the conquerors are busy, drinking in wine-cups forgetfulness of the wounded brothers; in the morn they will pray for their rest, and will bury them; but in the meanwhile, *dead with the dead, they think only of pleasure.*

A man wrapped in a black cloak comes down from the hill of the Stone of Rosetto, and turns his steps to the plain of Santa Maria; a big mastiff precedes him, carrying in his mouth a lantern to light the way. His dress is that of a holy friar, his face almost entirely hidden within his hood; yet, from that little which is visible, you would take him for the evil spirit who comes to enjoy the fruits of his temptation. With his arms crossed over his breast, but without reciting any prayers, he passes among the dead, looks at them, tramples over them, and keeps on. He had searched more than an hour over the bloody field, when he broke forth wearily: "Surely they swore to me he was dead!" He rested a while, then continued his search. There, where the slaughter had been the greatest, in the midst of a heap of corpses horribly mutilated, pressing with his foot the head of a fallen one, he heard a feeble groan.

"Of little charity! Are you a Christian? a friar of the Lord! and trample on the head of the dying?"

"Who are you? Is my hope deceiving me? Tell me who are you?"

"A dying man."

The monk hid his face still more within the hood, took the lantern from the mouth of the dog, held it near the face of the fallen one, and "You are Manfred!" he cried with savage joy.

"I was Manfred; now, I am a man who is dying. Oh!

if before appearing before the tribunal of God, you would in charity, holy brother . . ."

"Speak, king of the earth ; I rejoice in listening to you."

"Heaven has sent you to me, . . . but call me not a king ; the crown which I obtained with crimes, the Eternal has taken away with death. Will you listen to my confession ?"

"It is my sacred duty ; yet how do you hope to appease divine justice ? . . ."

"I have heard that the greatest crime committed by Cain was to despair of God's mercy. . . . Leave the care of forgiveness to Him who has the power ; . . . do you listen. . . . I will take you back in the bitterness of my soul through all my years, I will confess my sins before you, and God's mercy will absolve me through you."

The monk sat upon the ground, signed him with the sign of the cross, whispered an orison, then said : "Speak, king ; I am ready."

"Father, holy father, I am about accusing myself of a crime that my heart breaks in thinking of."

"Have faith ; you begin already to distrust ?"

"No, I hope in God's mercy. By my hands was shed that blood upon which, slipping, I now lie forever ; my throne, weighed down by a nefarious death, has fallen in ruins over my head, crushing my family with me. . . . You see in me, . . . you will be horror struck, but in the name of God, do not fly from me, . . . you see in Manfred the assassin of the Emperor Frederick . . ."

"You a parricide ?"

"A parricide !" and for a long time they both remained silent. Then Manfred resumed : "Speak not, holy father ; you could not say a word but my conscience has repeated it to me a thousand times, nor could your reproaches sting me more severely than it has done. . . . If remorse can expiate sin . . . oh ! mine was terrible, but likewise has been my remorse. It was on the night of the 13th of December ; the emperor was lying ill, . . . in his last illness. . . . I was sitting near his bed ; . . . the imperial mantle and crown stood upon a table a little away from me ; . . . the evil spirit tempted

me ; my eyes rested on the crown ; I thought of the power, I thought of conquest. . . . I pictured to myself kings and countries conquered at the foot of my throne ; . . . looking forward to future ages, every century seemed to me to be luminous with my fame ; . . . the more I gazed at the jewels that adorned it, the more they seemed to shine. . . . I stretched my hand to seize it ; . . . ah ! I drew it back in the very act. . . . Although I stood between Frederick and the diadem, yet the life of Frederick stood between me and the crown ; my soul was darkened ; I looked on my father ; he slept ; only the faintest breathing indicated that he was alive ; . . . a few days, a few hours, might end his precarious existence : . . . but the glitter of the diadem flattered me more fiercely than before. . . . After an hour of meditation, parricide did not appear to me so horrible ; . . . life was extinguishing itself, . . . it was only hastening it a few hours ; . . . glory and power dazzled me like two suns ; . . . the crime seemed to me like a little cloud in a serene sky . . . I did not see God, for my heart was hardened ; . . . the tempter conquered ; . . . I seized a pillow from under his head, . . . placed it over his face, . . . pressed it thus with my hands only a few seconds. . . . It was over ! . . .”

Manfred, overcome by the terrible recollection, fell back as in a swoon ; very little life now remained to him, and yet the most bitter grief that he had ever suffered was afflicting him in these last hours. Hardly come to himself again, he stretched his hands, groping about, and not meeting the object he sought for, he broke forth : “ Alas ! the confessor is fled ; . . . my narrative has driven him away . . . ”

“ I have not moved, I am at your side, O king,” replied the monk with a stifled voice.

“ Has not your hair stood on end ? ”

“ Go on confessing your greatest sins . . . ”

“ Greatest ! Does not parricide terrify you, father ? ”

“ There is no crime in the world that could retard or accelerate for one moment the pulsations of my heart ; . . . go on, king, go on in your confession.”

“ Have not the teachings of the gospel softened your

heart, then? Is not Manfred confessing his sins, O friar?"

"I came to this world an innocent soul; my mother rejoiced in the gentle boy, my father showered his favors on me for my virtuous deeds; in the happy dawn of my days I loved every created being,—the good because good, the bad because he might become good; a coward poisoned my life, thrust me into the path of perdition. I have gone over it; only a demon could listen to your confession, and you, O king, have made me such . . ."

"Your words . . . your fury? . . ."

"Give me back my innocence, . . . my innocence. . . . I am Caserta: look upon my countenance, worn out by grief: my sins are yours; . . . they will be punished in me, but justice will add them also to your punishments."

"Go, in God's name, go."

"Go! why? Have I not come to your death as to a nuptial banquet?"

"I am dying . . ."

"And is it not now twenty years and more that I have lived for this your last agony?"

"Go, I conjure you."

"By whom will you conjure me? by God's name? I have denied Him for you. By the love of my wife? You have contaminated her. By my children? Through you I was a father, but not of a son of mine. Cease then to conjure me, O king."

"The powers of hell disappear at the sign of the cross: will not man cease to torment at the prayers of the dying?"

"No:—allow me rather, O king, that I should sit and enjoy the convulsions of your agony."

"But go, cruel man! let me die in peace."

"No.—You have filled a cup of despair; now forbid me not, O king, to exult in putting it to your lips."

"Your conscience . . ."

"My conscience! have I not told you that it would frighten even Satan himself? have I not told you that it is your work?"

"Traitor! . . ."

“Be silent, guilty being. Was it not you that, affecting friendship, robbed me of the love of her, whom I loved with intense passion? You were the traitor, when, drunk with power, you loaded my head with infamy: beware, degraded creature, of uttering a sigh; or, if in the fury that torments you, you feel the need of cursing—curse yourself;—I have accomplished your destruction, and now I trample upon you.”

“If the voice of the king, although rising from the dust, would deign to appeal to any other judge but God, it would say to you, that before Lady Spina was dragged by force before the altar, she loved me, and had accepted me as her beloved husband . . .”

“She loved you, . . . and she was punished . . .”

“Did she not die in the fire of the castle?”

“I killed her . . .”

“Ah! may God forgive you.”

“And I poured my sin upon your head.”

“She will not accuse me: . . . our love was mutual . . . she was mine! . . . that sin weighs not on my conscience, . . . for the others the Lord will have mercy on my soul . . .”

“It is too late; you cannot repent of sin on the threshold of death: do you not remember what is written in the Scripture?”

“I remember that my sins were horrible, but infinite goodness hath large embrace for every one that asks for pardon . . .”

“It is written: ‘I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and ye have not regarded; you have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh.’”

“But it is also written: ‘The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord; He will save His creatures with mercy, not with justice.’”

“Your measure is full,—you are lost,—I tell you, you hope in vain.”

“You hope in vain, if you believe you can make me despair in these last moments when a sincere faith rejoices me with hopes. . . . Do you hear the whispers of your

passions? They will tell you that whilst you think of tormenting, you yourself are the tormented. . . .”

“Certainly, it is I who in this moment see the tombs open and the souls of the father, the brothers, and sons killed by me, arise to surround my death-bed ;—I who hear their mocking accents, I, the laughter with which they accompany my death ; . . . for you there will descend the angels from heaven to bring you peace ; for you there darts from the throne of the omnipotent a ray of glory upon which your blessed soul will ascend to celestial joys. . . . Tell me, guilty wretch, what atonement in the day of judgment will you set against the murder of your father ?

“My repentance . . .”

“To that of Corrado ?”

“My repentance . . .”

“To that of *your* son . . .”

“What son ?”

At a short distance there is heard a plaintive voice murmuring, “Yole !” Caserta starts to his feet, notices a dying man, lifts him by the arm, and without any respect for the sacred hour during which man called to the other life strives for awhile against the power of extinction, he drags him where Manfred lies, and throwing him into his arms howls ferociously : “Behold your son ! . . . oh ! my revenge is now full.” Then he sat down again, and turned the light of the lantern upon those faces to contemplate their expression.

Manfred recognized the dying man, threw his arms around him, and pressing him to his heart, exclaimed painfully : “O Rogiero ! O my son ! ah, my heart had told me ; . . . how do I see you, Rogiero !”

The unhappy youth, hardly able to open his eyes, asks : “Where have they dragged me ?”

“To the arms of a king, . . . to the arms of a father !” replies Caserta.

“Father !—king !—who is my father ? You, perhaps, Manfred !”

“Ah misery ! to the son of guilt, an embrace of blood !”

"Obscurity and grief saddened my years ; . . . I lived a life of tears ; . . . crimes, sorrow, remorse. . . . Oh ! all is compensated by the sweetness of this embrace. . . . I bless life ! . . ."

"Rejoice in the arms of a father whom you have betrayed, . . . rejoice in a parricide father !"

"Whose voice is this, father ? It grates painfully on my wounds . . ."

"It is the voice of a slave who insults the death of his master . . ."

"It is the voice of Caserta ; do you not recognize it, Rogiero ?"

"I know you as a wretch ; but beware : short is the joy that springs from the tears of others ; . . . an awful destiny awaits you, Rinaldo ; . . . you shake your head in derision ? From the depth of the misery where your perfidy has cast us, I contemplate your end, and I seem to sit upon a throne of glory. . . . Alas ! my words fail to my lips ; . . . father, is Yole safe ?"

"She is safe."

"No, she is a prisoner."

"He said a prisoner. . . . To whom did you intrust the unhappy one ?"

"Do you not remember ? To Procida."

"Then bite your tongue ; . . . serpent, she is safe. Father, I am dying . . ."

"O my son !"

"Why do you weep ? I see death with the same joy with which I saw you, O my betrayed father ; . . . my existence has been a torture, . . . it is a blessing to end it. . . . The blood of my mother was my baptismal water, . . . oil of extreme unction is the blood of my father. . . . Has there ever lived a soul in the world more miserable than I ?"

"O my son !"

"Hold me fast to your heart, . . . give me your hand, . . . father ; . . . I am going to the reward of misfortune."

He lifted the paternal hand to his mouth and kissed it, then tried to place it over his head ; falling back in the act, and uttering a groan, Rogiero expired.

Who could blame me, if, as Timantis covered with a veil the face of Agamemnon, I should pass over without describing the sensations that agitated Manfred? Who could do this? Who could even attempt it? I say naught of the time that intervened between the death of Rogiero and those words that the king spoke. "My death will not be so peaceful, yet I hasten it with my desire, . . . and feel that it is approaching. Rinaldo, on the point of appearing before the tribunal of the Eternal, I desire not to leave an object of hatred upon the earth; . . . needing God's forgiveness, I give you mine; . . . you see before you whether you have offended me; . . . forgive then; . . . let our mutual love be a merit toward repentance; . . . take my hand before it is cold with death . . ."

"Touch me not. I came to see you die, not to forgive."

"Ah! . . . I die, . . . and forgive you . . ."

"I live and hate you."

Manfred drooped down, and before long he began to sigh convulsively, and at intervals gasp the following broken sentences: "Speak to me not so mildly; . . . oh! show yourself not to me so lovingly; . . . call me parricide . . . reproach me bitterly, O father. . . . What do you, Corrado? why do you wipe my forehead? your linen has become red; . . . there was blood in it . . . it is yours . . . oh! he kisses me where there was his blood . . . blessed be you of the Lord . . . the kingdom of heaven . . . my soul . . . the joy of heaven . . . Lord have mercy on my sinful soul."

Count Caserta, intently bending over the face of Manfred to note every sigh, every agitation of the muscles, every slightest contortion of his lips, when he saw him dead, rose impetuously, and, throwing away the lantern, ran precipitously through the field of battle: often he stumbled against a dead body, often hitting against some fallen weapon, wounded himself; he seemed not to feel anything, with his cheeks sunk, his fists clenched, he ground his teeth, uttering fearful oaths, often striking his head and face, howling: "He is dead,—and did not despair."

Here ends our chronicle : only that, as it is the custom with novelists to accompany their heroes to the altar, or to the grave, it behooves me, since I cannot lead them to the first, to follow them to the second. Speaking therefore first of Charles d'Anjou, Count of Provence, I find in the histories that after the battle of Benevento, he occupied without much opposition the Neapolitan States, and with no less fortune he conquered the island of Sicily. how he ruled, why his power in Italy declined, how it ceased, I will not relate, for it may be an interesting subject for any one who wishes to continue the history up to the famous revolution of the *Sicilian Vespers* ; only, translating as faithfully as I can a Latin passage of Nicholas Jamsilla, a cotemporary chronicler, I will show to my readers how foolishly the Neapolitan barons trusted in the faith of the French ; they suffered insupportable burdens, they had to bend under foreign tyranny, and bear universal mockery and contempt beside. Let the Italians keep the example in their minds, and learn wisdom if they can. " Oh King Manfred ! " exclaims Jamsilla, " in the despair of every hope, now we have learned what you were, and sorrowfully deplore you. Flattered by the hope of present dominion, we reputed you a rapacious wolf among quiet lambs, and while we anxiously awaited large rewards in recompense for our disloyalty, too late we recognized you as a mild lamb. Now we acknowledge the mildness of your rule, when we compare it with the severity of the new. We often complained that you had usurped part of our privileges to strengthen your royal prerogatives ; now first our estates, then our persons are we obliged to offer as a prey to the cruel foreigner."

I will not relate the miserable end of Manfred with different words than those used by the chronicler Villani—so much the more trustworthy, inasmuch as he, belonging to the Guelph party, uses all his efforts to embellish the lofty deeds of Charles, and to find excuses for his bad ones : " For more than three days they sought for the body of Manfred, nor could it be found, and no one knew whether he had been killed or taken, or had escaped, for he had not worn royal armor in the battle.

Finally, a low clown of his people recognized him through several marks in his person, in the midst of the field where the battle had been the fiercest. Having found it, the said clown placed it astride of an ass of his, and went about, crying: '*Who buys Manfred?*' Then a baron of King Charles gave him a good beating with a stick, and carried the body of Manfred before the king, who seeing it, called all the barons that had been taken prisoners, and asked each one whether it was the body of Manfred; all timidly replied yes. But when Count Giordano Lancia came, he wrung his hands, weeping, and crying: '*Alas! my good master, what do I see? my brave, my wise master, who has so cruelly taken your life? Vase of philosophy, honor of knighthood, glory of kings, why is a knife denied me that I may kill myself to accompany you in death?*' For which he was very much praised by the French barons." (And Charles also praised him for his attachment to his king, but it did not restrain him from basely making him die in the prisons of Provence.) "King Charles was requested by several barons to allow them to bury it with due honors. Charles replied: '*Le fairois-je volontiers, si lui ne fût excommunié.*' But because he was excommunicated, King Charles would not allow it to be buried in a sacred place, but at the foot of the bridge of Benevento, and over his grave a stone was thrown by every one of his army, which made a great mountain of stones." So far Villani. The divine Dante, singing this sorrowful episode, adds that the Archbishop of Cosenza, Bartholomeus Pignatelli, by order of Pope Clement, had it taken out from under that mausoleum of stones, and thrown in the open field upon the banks of the river Verde, now known by the name of Marino, which runs near Ascoli! . . .

And while some beckoned us with bended hand

One called—"Whoe'er thou art there journeying so,
Turn! Think—hast ever looked on me before?"

I turned and gazed upon the one who spoke.

Handsome and blond, he looked high-born, but o'er

One brow appeared the severance of a stroke.

When I had humbly answered him that ne'er

Had I beheld him—"Look!" he said, and high
 Up on his breast showed me a wound he bare;
 Then added smilingly, "Manfred am I,
 The Empress Constance' grandson: in such name
 Do I entreat, when back thou shalt have gone,
 To my fair daughter hie, of whose womb came
 Sicily's boast and Aragon's renown,
 And tell her this—if aught but truth be said—
 That after two stabs, each of power to kill,
 I gave my soul back weeping ere it fled
 To Him who pardoneth of His own free will.
 My sins were horrible: but large embrace
 Infinite Goodness hath, whose arms will ope
 For every child who turneth back to Grace;
 And if Cosenza's bishop, by the Pope
 Clement set on to hound me to the last,
 That page of Holy Writ had better read,
 My bones had still been sheltered from the blast
 Near Benevento, by the bridge's head,
 Under their load of stones: but now without
 The realm they lie, by Verde's river—bare—
 For winds and rains to beat and blow about,
 Dragged with quench'd candles and with curses there.
 Yet not by their poor malediction can
 Souls be lost so but that Eternal Love
 May be brought back while hope hath life in man.
 'Tis true that one who sets himself above
 The Holy Church, and dies beneath its ban
 (Even though he had repented at the last),
 Outside this mount must unadmitted rove
 Thirty times longer than the term had been
 Of his presumptuous contumacy past,
 Unless good prayers a shorter penance win.
 See now what power thou hast to make me glad:
 Report of me to my good Constance bear,
 How thou saw'st me and what I've told thee add;
 For much it profits us what they do there.*

Ghino di Tacco, although mortally wounded, was carried off by his faithful followers to a place of safety; and they sought so much, that they were able to obtain two very famous physicians, and intrusted him into their hands, in order that they might exercise their best skill to cure him. Having examined him from head to foot, one

* DANTE'S PURGATORIO, *Canto Third*. Translation of T. W. PARSONS, ESQ.

declared that he was wounded in the lungs, the other affirmed that he was not; they discussed the whole night about it without agreeing; on the morning, unable to come to any understanding, they were on the point of putting their hands to their daggers the better to convince each other; it failed of a very little that to cure a wounded man two had killed one another.

Ghino's followers interposed, tired of the disgusting squabble, and ordered them with severe looks to be silent, and take good care to cure him, otherwise it would be the worse for them. Then they were silent: one began to bleed him, the other to give him strengthening drinks; one ordered diet, the other to eat and drink; as it pleased God, the strong constitution of Ghino overcame every obstacle, and he was cured. People said that that cure was a miracle; and in fact until then, within the best memory of man, no one had ever survived to the science of two physicians. Having returned in process of time to his castle of Radicofani, he, though hating it, kept on his old profession of robbing the highways; when, towards the end of the century, having taken prisoner the Abbot de Cligny, who was going to the baths of Siena, the good prelate became so enamored of his virtues, that he reconciled him with the Church, and Pope Boniface VIII. *being of a noble spirit, and a great encourager of merit*, called him to his court, gave him the priory of an hospital, and made him a knight; which history any one who desires to know it can read it in the last day of the *Decameron of Boccaccio*.* With all the diligence that I have used in my researches, I have never been able to satisfy my curiosity respecting the Emir Jussuff. It is possible that he died in battle; possible also that he had the chance of escaping to Africa: yet I cannot certify to the one thing nor the other, and leave it to the conscience of the reader to believe what he thinks the more probable of the two.

Famous for a very long time resounded through the

* As a complement to Ghino's history we have appended this novel of Boccaccio. See Appendix.—TRANS.

kingdom the report of the dreadful death of Rinaldo d'Aquino. Time had buried it in oblivion. Now, as fortune wills, it is recalled by me to the memory of men. Invited to court by the Count of Provence, he refused ; and Charles, delighted to enjoy the benefit without paying the reward of treachery, allowed him willingly to retire from the world. Rinaldo, in the solitude of his castle, incessantly meditating the crimes and the revenge committed, tormented by the sting of remorse, feeling that from the death of Manfred he had not derived that comfort which he had hoped before it happened, watching in the nights, wandering sleepless through the halls of his palace, murmuring in the fever of grief horrible imprecations, fearful of the light of day as if it was the presence of an enemy, avoiding all human society, he dared one day to cast a glance within his soul, and wondered how he could bear it still to abide within his body. He resolved to die. In the evening he came down to the hall, and gathering all his domestics, he dismissed them with many presents, stating that he intended to enter a new life. They all supposed that he had resolved to enter into some convent, and praised him much for it. He had been always a good master to them. They knelt before him, and wept with grief ; perhaps in that moment they felt the loss of their position—perhaps it was sincere grief. Enough—what was real was the weeping. They wanted his blessing ; they begged repeatedly for it. Rinaldo, like a man beside himself, came suddenly to his senses, and resuming his baronial haughtiness, commanded them all to rise and depart. Silently they all returned to their rooms, to meditate plans in order to provide for their remaining years. On the morrow, an esquire, whom the new command had not been able to make forget his ancient habits, not seeing the count appear at the usual hour, went softly to his room, and listened ; he heard no sound ; he looked through the key-hole, and saw his master hanging by the neck. The faithful servant uttered a piercing cry, and with all his strength forced the door so violently, that he threw it unhinged into the middle of the room.

Count Rinaldo had placed a stool over the bed ; then hanging the rope to the beam, and fixing a noose around his neck, had kicked away the stool, and remained suspended. Upon the head of the bed stood an open box ; the treasure it contained was the skull of Lady Spina. Though his face was black, his mouth distorted, yet he did not seem dead. The servant, drawing his knife, ran towards Count Rinaldo to cut the rope. The mastiff of Caserta that lay under the bed, imagining that the servant was attempting to strike his master, jumped upon him fiercely, and seized him by the throat. The servant defended himself as best he could, and loudly called for help. He called so long that finally he was heard by several of his companions ; they rushed to the room, bound the dog, and cutting the rope, laid Caserta upon the bed. They used all means possible to revive him, but in vain ; perhaps if the servant had immediately cut the rope, he might have been saved : the time that the mastiff held him back ended certainly the life of the miserable Caserta. If it was chance which punished Rinaldo for the treachery committed against Manfred by the faithfulness of his dog, it must be confessed that chance sometimes is more wise than justice. Angiolo di Costanzo, in the history of Naples, desiring to clear in some measure the fame of Count Rinaldo, narrates that he, having been informed that the king had seduced the countess, *desirous of proceeding as a knight and according to the rules of honor*, sent secretly to Rome, where he knew that with Charles there was the flower of the chivalry of that age, a confidential agent of his, who proposed before the assembly of those knights, whether it was lawful in such case to rebel against his king, and fail in his fealty ; which, as the reader may imagine, was decided *by the knights and literati who followed Charles*, not only that it was lawful, but rather it was a duty to do so. I for my part, being born of the people, do not know how a knight should act, nor in what he makes the rules of honor to consist ; but I think that treachery is always treachery ; that it is dishonorable to betray faith to him to whom one has sworn it. That if Manfred acted ill, Ca-

serta did worse ; the guilt of others does not diminish one's own ; infamies cannot be cancelled by each other ; and at any rate, that if Rinaldo desired to avenge himself, he should have avenged himself against the offender, not against his people, nor by calling the foreigner to oppress his country ; that the poniard or the poison should be reputed less blamable than this disgraceful revenge.

John of Procida, destined later to avenge the family of Manfred, did not succeed in saving it. Having taken refuge in Lucera he sent to the seashore to procure a galley or other vessel that could take them to Catalonia. The messengers fell into the hands of the enemy and were killed. Lucera, besieged by the French, defended itself bravely ; certainly there was very little hope ; the food and the garrison diminished from day to day, but Procida protested that Charles should not enter the city as long as there was a living soul in it. Tempted to betray his trust, he threw with his own hands the shameful ambassador from the walls of the city. All that man could do, he had done : famine and death stared them in the face. Be it that the long siege wearied Charles, be it that he feared to take it by assault, though possessing such preponderating forces, he had recourse to fraud. He proposed to Procida that if he surrendered the town (since it was useless to resist), he would grant to Manfredino the investiture of the principality of Taranto, and the other possessions left in the will of the Emperor Frederick to his father Manfred. He would not exact any homage of allegiance, any cession of the crown of Naples ; for security he would engage his word as king. He admired besides the rare fidelity of Procida, who with such noble resistance defended the cause of his master ; he would surely compensate it ; faith was a beautiful virtue, nor less praiseworthy because contrary to his own designs ; he would hold him as his truest friend, as he had held him his most generous enemy. Procida refused to surrender, suspicious of the flattery ; the besieged ones however compelled him. Charles d'Anjou kept his promise to Manfredino of Swabia in the same manner that Henry the Swabian kept it to William the Norman ; thus

in those remote times kings resembled each other in their faith! Elena, Yole, Manfredino and Procida, imprisoned in the castle dell' Uovo in Naples, attested by a fresh example that the conquered should never trust but to their graves. Procida was able, however, to deceive the guards, lower himself from the tower, and escape. He took upon himself the vengeance of Manfred, and so much he worked in Aragon at the court of King Peter, so much at Constantinapolis with the Emperor Paleologus, so much he incited his compatriots, whom, with incredible boldness, he visited in Sicily, so much Pope Nicholas of the Orsini, to whose court he went dressed as a monk—that, after three years of continual voyages, of drawbacks and dangers, he revolutionized Sicily against King Charles, restored there Constance, daughter of Manfred, queen to Peter of Aragon, and, with one exception, destroyed all the French that dwelt in the island. A wonderful history, that, should fortune look smilingly on me, I would not spare any labor to add to this.

Elena and her children never re-appeared to the light of day; how long they lived, how they died, is a mystery of crime. The story was at one time related, that in the western tower of the castle dell' Uovo, on the eve of All Souls' Day, after the bell had rung the midnight hour, there would be heard a cry, and soon after would be seen a sceptred female ghost gliding swiftly along the battlements without moving steps, and enter the chapel; the sentries never dared to wait for it at their post, and would all fly at that hour into their quarters. Once a certain soldier of Gascony, incited by his companions and by wine, dared to follow the ghost and enter into the chapel with it; in the morning he was found senseless on the pavement. Coming to his senses, he related that the sceptred ghost, kneeling before the altar, had struck a tombstone, and from the opened sepulchre had risen two other ghosts—one of a maiden, the other of a boy—who, throwing themselves on the neck of the first, had embraced her as one does the dearest of kin; that afterwards they began fervently to pray before the image of

the Madonna. The image thus prayed to, turning to the infant she held on her arm, spoke thus: "Grant to these afflicted ones their request, my sweet Son,"—to which the infant making no reply, the Virgin rising to her feet, placed him upon the altar, and kneeling before him in a supplicating attitude, begged again: "Grant to these afflicted ones their request, my sweet Son;" at which prayer the sacred infant, gathering with his hand some blood that dropped from the bosom of the sceptred ghost, wrote several letters upon the table of the altar; then the lamps were extinguished, an earthquake shook the chapel, and he fell, struck senseless to the ground. They went up to the altar, and there they found written with fresh blood, REVENGE. They wiped it out, but every succeeding year, on All Souls' Day, it reappeared redder than before; nor did it ever cease to appear until the slaughter of the *Sicilian Vespers*. He who can do all, might have performed the above miracle. Still, I think that it ought to be attributed to superstition; which, however, demonstrates how strong was the pre-conceived ill-will of the people, who were convinced that Heaven was in league with them to obtain revenge against the foreign oppressor.

What is the moral of this book? If minds accustomed to speculate upon the reasons of things will learn from this history that crime begets revenge, and with never-ending alternation revenge begets crime; and that when virtue has no power to please, there is no other argument to restrain man from wrongdoing, and the best that can be done is to frighten him by the consequences of evil, curb him by terror, since we cannot do it by love—if, I say, he will learn these truths, I doubt not that the moral of the book will appear such as I intended to instil in it.

And now, gentle reader, *addio*, (farewell.) Meditating upon this word it seems to me that not only it sounds plaintive on account of the sensations it arouses, but also by a sad combination of the letters, farewell;—if you could feel even one half the sadness in receiving it, which I feel in giving it,—oh! the reward would far surpass my hopes.

APPENDIX.

BOCCACCIO'S NOVEL II., TENTH DAY.



GHINO DI TACCO was a man famous for his bold and insolent robberies, who, being banished from Siena, and at utter enmity with the Counts of Santa Fiore, caused the town of Radicofani to rebel against the Church, and lived there, whilst his gang robbed all who passed that way. Now, when Boniface the Eighth was pope, there came to court the Abbot of Cligny, reputed to be one of the richest prelates in the world, and having impaired his stomach with high living, he was advised by his physicians to go to the baths of Siena, as a certain cure. Having leave from the pope, the abbot set out with a goodly train of coaches, carriages, horses and servants, paying no regard to the rumors concerning this robber. Ghino was apprised of his coming and took his measures accordingly; when, without the loss of a man, he inclosed the abbot and his whole retinue in a narrow defile, whence it was impossible for them to escape. This being done, he sent one of his principal followers to the abbot, with his service, requesting he would do him the favor to alight, and visit him at his castle. The abbot replied, with a great deal of passion, that he had nothing to do with Ghino, but that his resolution was to go on, and he would see who dared to stop him. "My lord," quoth the man, with a great deal of humility, "you are now in a place where all excommunications are kicked out of doors, so please to oblige my master in this thing; it will be your best way."

Whilst they were talking together, the place was soon surrounded with highwaymen, and the abbot, seeing himself a prisoner, went with a great deal of ill-will with the fellow to the castle, followed by his whole retinue, where he dismounted, and was lodged, by Ghino's appointment, in a poor dark little room, whilst every other person was well accommodated according to his respective station, and the carriages and all the horses taken exact care of. This being done, Ghino went to the abbot, and said, "My lord, Ghino, whose guest you are, requests the favor of you to let him know whither you are going, and upon what account?" The abbot was wise enough to lay all his haughtiness aside for the time being, and satisfied him with regard to both. Ghino went away on hearing this.

and having made up his mind that he would cure his lordship without a bath, he ordered a great fire to be kept constantly in his room, coming to him no more till next morning, when he brought him two slices of toasted bread, in a fine napkin, and a large glass of his own rich white wine, saying to him, "My lord, when Ghino was young he studied physic, and he declares that the very best medicine for a pain in the stomach is what he has now provided for you, of which these things are to be the beginning. Then take them and have a good heart." The abbot, whose hunger was much greater than was his will to joke, ate the bread, though with a great deal of indignation, and drank the glass of wine, after which he began to talk a little arrogantly, asking many questions, and demanding more particularly to see this Ghino. But Ghino passed over part of what he said as vain, and the rest he answered very courteously, declaring that Ghino meant to make him a visit very soon, and then left him. The abbot saw him no more till next morning, when he brought him as much bread and wine as before, and in the same manner. And thus he continued doing many days, till he found the abbot had eaten some dried beans, which he had left purposely in the chamber, when he inquired of him, as from Ghino, how he found his stomach? The abbot replied, "I should be well enough if I were out of this man's clutches. There is nothing I want now so much as to eat, for his medicines have had such an effect upon me, that I am ready to die with hunger."

Ghino, then, having furnished a room with the abbot's own goods, and provided an elegant entertainment, to which many people of the town were invited, as well as the abbot's own domestics, went the next morning to him, and said, "My lord, now you find yourself recovered, it is time for you to quit this infirmary." So he took him by the hand, and leading him into the chamber, left him there with his own people. Whilst Ghino was away giving orders about the feast, the abbot gave his people an account of the life he had led in that place, they on the other hand declaring that they had been used by Ghino with all possible respect. When the time came, they sat down, and were nobly entertained, but still without Ghino's making himself known. After the abbot had been treated for some days in that manner, Ghino had all the goods and furniture brought into a large room, and the horses were likewise led into a courtyard which was under it. Then he inquired how his lordship now found himself, and whether he was yet able to ride. The abbot made answer, that he was strong enough, and his stomach perfectly well, and that he only wanted to be quit of this man. Ghino then brought him into the room where all his goods were, and leading him also to the window, that he might take a view of his horses, he said, "My lord, you must understand it was no evil disposition, but his being driven a poor exile from his own house, and persecuted by many enemies, that forced Ghino di Tacco, whom you see before you, to be a robber upon the highways, and an enemy to the court of Rome. You seem, however, to be a person of honor; since,

therefore, I have cured you of your weakness of stomach, I do not mean to treat you as I would do another person that should fall into my hands—that is, to take what I please; but I would have you consider my necessity, and then give me what you will yourself. Here is all that belongs to you; the horses you may see out of the window: take either part or the whole, just as you are disposed, and go or stay, as is most agreeable to you.”

The abbot was surprised to hear a highwayman talk in so courteous a manner, which did not a little please him; so turning all his former passion and resentment into kindness and goodwill, he ran with a heart full of friendship to embrace him: “I protest solemnly, that to procure the friendship of such a one as I take you to be, I would undergo more than what you have already made me suffer. Cursed be that evil fortune which has thrown you into this way of life!” So taking only a few of his most necessary things, and also of his horses, and leaving all the rest, he came back to Rome.

The pope had heard of the abbot’s being a prisoner, and though he was much concerned at it, yet upon seeing him he inquired what benefit he had received from the baths? The abbot replied, with a smile, “Holy father, I found a physician much nearer, who has cured me exceedingly well;” and he told him the manner of it, which made the pope laugh heartily. Then, going on with his story, and moved by a truly generous spirit, he requested of his holiness one favor. The pope, imagining he would ask something else, freely consented to grant it. Then said the abbot, “Holy father, what I have to ask is, that you would bestow a free pardon on Ghino di Tacco, my doctor, because of all the people of worth that I ever met with, he certainly is most to be esteemed, and the damage he does is more the fault of fortune than himself. Change but his condition, and give him something to live upon, according to his rank and station, and I dare say you will have the same opinion of him that I have.” The pope being of a noble spirit, and a great encourager of merit, promised to do so, if he was such a person as the abbot reported, and, in the meantime, gave letters of safe conduct for his coming thither. Upon that assurance, Ghino came to court, when the pope was soon convinced of his worth, and reconciled to him, giving him the priory of an hospital, and creating him a knight. And there he continued as a friend and loyal servant of the Holy Church, and to the Abbot of Cligny, as long as he lived.

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